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A Motion Picture Reviewing Service
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Its Editorial Policy: No Problem Too Big for Its Editorial
Columns, if It is to Benefit the Exhibitor.

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No. 1

THE TAX QUESTION

According to a recent bulletin issued by Abram F. Myers, National Allied's General Counsel, the future of the proposed amusement tax of 1c on each 5c or fraction of admission is uncertain.

Myers points out that, when the tax bill was reported out of the Senate Finance Committee, it seemed as if the Senate would pass on it quickly, and that an effort would be made to reconcile the differences between both Houses so that the bill might be enacted before Congress recessed for the holidays.

"... Since Congress recessed," states Myers, "Secretary Morgenthau has launched an attack on the bill which appears to forshadow a determined fight against it by the Administration. Opposition to the bill is based on (a) its alleged failure to provide adequate revenue to finance the war and curb inflation; (b) its limitations on the re-negotiation of war contracts.

"Therefore, we may wake up some morning early in 1944 to find that the Treasury is still waging its battle, perhaps more furiously than ever, to step up the tax to 3c on each 10c or fraction.

"If the storm signals are raised you will be duly notified. . . . When this fight is finished this office will issue a bulletin giving some of the details and making definite suggestions for the future. Every man and woman interested in any way in the operation of theatres must be organized to resist future attempts at discriminatory taxation."

Myers' warning of a possible fight against the tax bill by the administration should be heeded by every exhibitor, for the campaign against discriminatory taxation is yet to be won. Any laxity at this stage of the game may prove fatal to your business. Keep on bombarding your Senators and Congressmen with letters and telegrams of protest. Tell them that an increase in the admission tax will prove ruinous, not only to yourself, but also to the industry as a whole. The intensive campaign waged thus far by you and your organizations has been chiefly responsible for the downward revision of the originally proposed 30% tax by both the Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committees. Your efforts will have to be intensified even more if you are to frustrate the Treasury Department's attempts to impose on admissions a greater tax. Act now!—your business is at stake.

* * *

Although the proposed tax increase on admissions is to be borne by the public, we cannot get away from the fact that the exhibitors will suffer from it. It is to

be expected that an increase in admission prices, owing to the tax rise, will have an adverse effect on theatre attendance. Public opinion, which for a time was geared for an increase in the general cost of living, has definitely changed, for the cost of living has by far outdistanced the rise in wages.

As a result, the public today is not in the mood to accept increased prices, whether they may be for commodities or for entertainment. The devious methods employed by many sellers to circumvent OPA rulings; the deliberate flaunting of ceiling prices by arrogant and discourteous shopkeepers; and other rank abuses, to numerous to mention, has raised public indignation to a point where a price rise, even one that is justified and beyond the control of the seller, is resented deeply. So strong is this indignation that each day more and more people are assuming an "I'll-simply-get-along-without-it" attitude. And they mean it!

So far as the exhibitor is concerned, he can offset this resentment to some extent by educating his patrons to the fact that an increase in admission price represents a government amusement tax. This can be done through trailers, handbills, and suitable notices posted in the lobby of the theatre.

Even though an exhibitor will take the precaution to inform his patrons that an admission price rise is the result of a government tax, I doubt if it will stem the decrease in patronage to an appreciable degree for, in addition to those who resent price increases in the belief that it is a form of profiteering, there are millions of workers whose pockets are not lined with excessive cash, and who find it difficult enough to make ends meet just buying the bare necessities of life. In the latter class is generally found the family man, who together with his wife and children make up a large percentage of the steady picture-going public, for the motion picture has always been the type of entertainment he can best afford. Without this family man's patronage, many small-town and neighborhood theatres could not exist. Yet the exhibitors are being compelled to raise their prices, thus risking his loss as a customer.

Since the exhibitor, burdened by high operating costs and exorbitant film rentals, cannot afford to absorb the tax increase, thus retaining his present admission level in order to prevent decreased attendance, it naturally follows that he will suffer financial losses, perhaps to the extent, in some cases, of losing his business. For this reason something has to be done about it.

(Continued on last page)

"Tender Comrade" with Ginger Rogers and Robert Ryan

(RKO release date not set; time, 103 min.)

A good topical drama. It will undoubtedly do exceptional business because of Ginger Rogers' popularity, and of the several deeply emotional situations. The story revolves around the trials and tribulations of four women, who live together and seek solace from one another while waiting for their husbands to return from the war. The action is slowed down considerably by excessive dialogue, but it has much heart interest, and the characters because of their honesty towards each other, arouse one's sympathy. It has a good share of comedy, and several of the situations will tug at one's heart strings. Although Miss Rogers is cast in a sympathetic role, there is about her portrayal a harshness that tends to detract from the characterization. The ending, where Miss Rogers is notified of her husband's death, is tragic and leaves one with a depressed feeling; in these days, it may remind many women that a similar tragedy might befall them. A good part of the action is in flashback, revealing incidents in the married life of Miss Rogers and Robert Ryan before his departure overseas:—

Ginger Rogers and Robert Ryan, a happily married young couple, are separated when war comes and Ryan is sent overseas. Ginger secures employment in a defense plant, where she makes friends with Ruth Hussey, a flighty married woman, who was not above going out with other men while her husband served overseas; Patricia Collinge, a middle-aged woman, whose husband and son were in the service; and Kim Hunter, a lovable young girl who had married Richard Martin one hour before his departure overseas. The four lonely wives pool their resources and live together. Their advertisement for a housekeeper is answered by Mady Christians, an educated German-born woman, who, unable to work in a defense plant because of non-citizenship, seeks to do her part by helping war workers. Moreover, her husband an American, was in the service. The wives accept Mady as one of the family, sharing their wages with her. When Ruth's husband is reported missing in action, the women are drawn closer together. All are delighted when Ginger announces that she is going to have a baby. With the birth of the child they act as if it were their own. To add to the cheerfulness, Ruth learns that her husband had been rescued at sea, and she determines to turn over a new leaf. A surprise visit by Kim's husband gives each woman an opportunity to fuss over him as if he were their own. In the midst of this gaiety, Ginger receives a telegram notifying her of Ryan's death. Keeping the news from the others, she resolves that her son shall emulate his father in courage and faith; she determines to join the others in helping to entertain Kim's husband.

Dalton Trumbo wrote the story and screen play, David Hempstead produced it, and Edward Dmytryk directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Sing a Jingle" with Allan Jones, June Vincent and Edward Norris

(Universal, January 7; time, 62 min.)

A routine program musical, differing little from numerous such pictures that have come off Universal's assembly line. There is very little to the plot, which concerns itself with a famed radio personality who hides his identity in order to do his share in the war effort. The outcome is quite obvious, and there is nothing in the story really to hold one's interest. It should do as entertainment for the younger element, for Allan Jones' singing is pleasant, and the music is of the popular variety. Gus Schilling and Betty Kean provide some mildly effective comedy:—

Upon completion of a farewell broadcast over a nationwide hookup, preparatory to his entering the Army, Ray King (Allan Jones), a popular baritone, learns from Wright Andrews (Jerome Cowan), his manager, that he had been rejected from service. Incensed, King reassumes his legal name, Steve Roberts and secures employment in a mid-western defense plant owned by S. P. Crane (Samuel H.

Hinds). Because of a housing shortage, Steve is given temporary lodging in the Crane mansion, where he meets Muriel (June Vincent), Crane's daughter, who falls in love with him. Muriel, a spoiled debutante, becomes piqued by Steve's indifference to her. She develops a sudden interest in the war effort, and goes to work in her father's plant. Together with Steve, she plans a war bond show for the employees. Meanwhile Jeffery Abbott (Edward Norris), a wealthy wastrel, who loved Muriel, is moved to jealousy by her interest in Steve. He manages to obtain Steve's personnel record from the company's files, and notifies Andrews in New York of his whereabouts. Steve, to assure the show's success, promises to secure the services of the famous Ray King. When Andrews arrives in town, Steve induces him to publicize "King's" appearance. Steve reveals his identity on the night of the show. Abbott goes on the stage and tries to expose him as a cheap publicity hunter. Andrews takes charge of the situation and, quieting the audience, explains Steve's sacrifice of fame and fortune in order to serve his country. Steve wins the acclaim of the audience, and he finishes his concert with Muriel in his arms.

John Grey, Eugene Conrad, Lee Sands, and Fred Bath wrote the screen play. Edward C. Lilley produced and directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Heavenly Body" with William Powell, Hedy Lamarr and James Craig

(MGM, no release date set; time, 95 min.)

An amusing marital farce-comedy, which will have to depend on the drawing power of the leading players for its box-office chances. The story is far-fetched, and none of the characters do anything to arouse sympathy, since most of their actions are ridiculous. The comedy is provoked by the marital difficulties encountered by an astronomer when his wife takes a sudden interest in astrology and believes a prediction that a new man would come into her life. Though some of the situations are laugh-provoking, there is not really one that will remain in one's mind. Miss Lamarr and Powell do their best with second-rate material:—

Feeling neglected and restless because William Powell, her astronomer-husband, was preoccupied with a new comet he had discovered, Hedy Lamarr seeks some diversion. Through Spring Byington, a neighbor Hedy meets Fay Bainter, an astrologist, and is told by her that, by the twenty-second of the month, she will fall in love with a man who had traveled widely. Hedy thoroughly honest, informs Powell of the prediction. Upset at Hedy's belief in astrology, Powell leaves her and goes to live in his observatory. Hedy patiently waits for her "man" to appear, but nothing happens. After an uneventful day on the twenty-second of the month, she telephones Powell and, admitting that she was wrong, asks him to return home. Just as midnight approaches, James Craig, an air raid warden, reprimands Hedy for violating a blackout rule. She invites him into the house and, questioning him, learns that he had traveled widely. Hedy feels sure that the prediction had come true. Powell arrives home just as Craig leaves, and senses Hedy's reaction. On the following day, Powell meets Craig and asks him to change his district. Craig, however, admits frankly that he had fallen in love with Hedy. Despite Powell's efforts to keep them apart, fate keeps throwing Hedy and Craig together. Powell decides to employ astrology to repair his marriage. He visits Miss Bainter and compels her to write a fake horoscope for Hedy, in which his own untimely death is foretold. He feigns illness to gain her sympathy, but to no avail for Hedy learns of the fake horoscope. Powell gives up hope and leaves her once again. At Craig's urging, Hedy decides to go to Reno, but she changes her mind at the last moment and effects a reconciliation with Powell.

Michael Arlen and Walter Reisch wrote the screen play, Arthur Hornblow, Jr., produced it, and Alexander Hall directed it. The cast includes Henry O'Neill, Morris Ankrum, Connie Gilchrist and others.

There are no objectionable situations.

"Suspected Person" with Clifford Evans

(PRC, November 29; time, 76 min.)

This English-made gangster melodrama is moderately entertaining program fare. It directs some human appeal, but the story is trite and lacks originality in treatment. Moreover, it is short on suspense and the action is slow, most of the excitement being concentrated in the closing scenes where the criminals are apprehended. On the whole, American audiences may find it a bit too "British." The romantic interest, though pleasant, is incidental:—

Acquitted of a bank robbery through lack of evidence, Robert Beatty and Eric Clavering, American gangsters, learn from an accomplice that Clifford Evans, an Englishman, had taken the \$50,000 stolen from the bank back to England. They set out to follow Evans. Upon his arrival in England Evans goes to live at an apartment house operated by his sister (Patricia Roc). There he meets and falls in love with Anne Firth, a cabaret singer. Suspicious of Evans' mysterious movements, Patricia searches his room and learns through newspaper clippings that he was involved in the robbery. Meanwhile Inspector David Farrar of Scotland Yard, informed by the New York police that the gangsters were en route to England, decides to shadow them in the hope that they will lead him to the stolen money. Upon their arrival, the gangsters, through underworld acquaintances, learn of Evans' whereabouts. They go to the apartment house and threaten him, but Evans, at gun-point, forces them to leave. Suspecting Evans, Farrar poses as a traveler and secures lodging at the house. He falls in love with Patricia. To change the stolen money into English currency, Evans travels to Holyhead. The gangsters follow him and knock him unconscious, but Evans, prepared for such an eventuality, had mailed the money to himself at Holyhead. As he calls for the package on the following day, Evans is confronted by Farrar. To the surprise of both men the package contains newspapers. Returning to London, Evans learns that the gangsters had kidnapped Anne. Desperate, he arranges to meet them at a dockside inn, promising to produce the money in exchange for Anne. Farrar and his men trail Evans to the inn and, after a gun battle arrest the gangsters. Later, Evans and Farrar learn that Patricia had substituted the newspapers for the money, and that she had mailed the \$50,000 to the American embassy. Assured that Evans will turn over a new leaf, Farrar drops the investigation and proposes to Patricia.

Lawrence Huntington wrote the screen play and directed it.

Adult entertainment.

"The Girl from Monterrey" with Armida, Jack LaRue and Edgar Kennedy

(PRC, September 24; time, 59 min.)

A pretty good program comedy-melodrama with music; it is fast-moving, has good comedy situations, and the story holds one's interest throughout. Although produced on a modest budget, its entertainment values make it worthy of playdates in situations other than the normal PRC market. Much of the enjoyment is derived from the engaging performances of the cast, particularly of Armida, as a fiery Mexican singer, who guides the boxing career of her brother and leads him to the world's championship. Edgar Kennedy is quite comical as a fight promoter, provoking much laughter with his well known exasperations:—

Armida, popular entertainer in a Mexican cafe is visited by Anthony Caruso, her brother, who informs her that he had left college to become a prizefighter. Caruso comes to the attention of Edgar Kennedy, an American fight promoter, who signs him to a contract. Armida accompanies Caruso to New York, where she becomes his manager and trainer. In Kennedy's office, Armida meets Terry Frost, contender for the light heavyweight championship, and falls in love with him. Under Armida's guidance, Caruso wins one fight after another by knockouts. Meanwhile Frost works his way up to the championship, much to Armida's delight. Caruso's sensational record impresses the boxing commissioner, who orders a match between Caruso and

Frost. Frantic at the thought that her brother and sweetheart would fight each other, Armida protests against the match, but to no avail. Jack LaRue, Frost's crooked fight manager, arranges with Veda Ann Borg, a cabaret entertainer, to keep Caruso out of condition, so that Frost would win the fight. Frost, however, was unaware of the arrangement. On the eve of the fight, Veda brings Caruso home in an intoxicated condition. Armida, suspecting foul play, forces a confession from Veda. Angry because Caruso resented her treatment of Veda, and disappointed because she believed Frost was involved in the plot, Armida attends the bout, but does not root for either man. After a furious battle, Caruso beats Frost and wins the championship. The two fighters disappear after the fight. They show up several days later in Army uniforms and effect a reconciliation with Armida.

Arthur Hoerl wrote the screen play from a story by George Green and Robert Gordon. Jack Schwarz produced it and Wallace Fox directed it. Harry D. Edwards was associate producer.

Morally suitable for all.

"Three Russian Girls" with Anna Sten and Kent Smith

(United Artists, January 14; time, 80 min.)

As a tribute to the valor of Russian nurses serving on the battlefield, this war film is forceful, for it depicts realistically the magnificent service they are rendering under the most trying conditions; as entertainment, however, it is no more than moderately engrossing program fare, for as far as the story is concerned it presents little in the way of novelty and lacks substance. It depends for its drama on a series of hackneyed situations that fail to impress. There are some exciting battle scenes towards the finish. Actual scenes of the Leningrad siege have been inserted to good effect. But on the whole, the action is slow. The production values, however, are good:—

As the citizens of Leningrad rise to the defense of their historical city, Red Cross headquarters calls all volunteer nurses to duty. Among those reporting are Anna Sten, whose love for Russia sets an example for the others; Mimi Forsythe, a former dancer, who reluctantly exchanges her dancing slippers for military boots; and Cathy Frye, a 'teen-age girl who pleads that she be allowed to serve. Within a few hours, Anna leads a group of twenty nurses to the battlefield, where they convert an old house into a field hospital. Despite the terrifying bombardment, the nurses, under Anna's inspiring leadership, carry on with their work. Kent Smith, an American flyer who had been shot down while testing a plane, is brought to the hospital wounded seriously. Though an operation on him proves successful, Kent's legs remain numb from the shock. Anna cares for him day and night, and Kent, though despondent, slowly recovers his will to live. The approaching enemy forces the nurses to evacuate the patients, but, owing to a shortage of ambulances, Anna remains behind with some of the wounded, seeking refuge in a dugout. In this moment of danger Anna and Kent fall in love with each other. They are rescued on the following day and driven to another hospital far removed from the front. Smith recovers and walks again. Anna, though deeply in love with him, does not permit her personal feelings to interfere with her duty. When a call comes from the front for volunteer nurses, she goes without hesitation, as do Mimi and Cathy. At the front Anna acts as both soldier and nurse. Mimi is killed by a sniper's bullet, and Anna, wounded seriously in a pitched battle with the enemy, is taken to a hospital in Leningrad. Ordered to return to the United States for duty, Smith visits Anna at the hospital and bids her goodbye with the assurance that they will meet again when victory is their's.

Aben Kandel and Dan James wrote the screen play, Gregor Rabinovitch produced it, and Fedor Ozep and Henry Kesler directed it. Eugene Frenke was associate producer. The cast includes Alexander Granach, Paul Guilfoyle and others.

Morally suitable for all.

The pending tax bill provides that the new rates are temporary, and that they shall end "on the first day of the first month which begins six months or more after the date of the termination of hostilities in the present war."

It is reasonable to assume that, so long as this war lasts, and assuredly six months after, the distributors will enjoy as great, and even greater, profits as they are enjoying today. And, mind you, these profits are the greatest in their history, even though their revenue from foreign markets has been reduced substantially. In addition, they have a large backlog of product, which, after the war, will net them millions of dollars from the foreign markets they are not serving now. In the midst of all this plenty, why not look to the distributors to make up part of the losses the exhibitors will suffer during the period the emergency tax increase is in effect? For them to assume some of the exhibitors' burden would have little, if any, effect on their net profits. Moreover, by helping the small exhibitor now they help themselves, for when normalcy returns they will find the outlets for their product still intact. And in normal times the small independent exhibitor's business spells the difference between loss and profit.

One method by which the distributors can make up an exhibitor's losses is to reduce in an equitable amount their film rental rates, whether on flat terms or on percentage. This reduction should, of course, be based on normal film rental rates and not on the inflated terms being demanded today because of an artificial product shortage.

The distributors have an opportunity to do themselves and the industry in general a great service. Will they take advantage of it?

* * *

Assuming that the proposed tax of 1c on each 5c or fraction is finally adopted, it would be foolhardy for an exhibitor to absorb any part of the tax increase in order to maintain his present level of admissions. Such a policy will create a competitive condition that may prove disastrous to the exhibitors. As pointed out by Mr. Myers recently, "the law not only does not contemplate absorption of the tax, it actually provides that it shall be paid by the public. In essence, the tax is an excise on the right to buy a ticket not to sell it."

An exhibitor who attempts to absorb any part of the new tax would compel his competitor to do likewise. This vitally important matter requires the immediate attention of all exhibitor organizations, for a unified policy is essential if an admission war between competitors is to be averted.

CAUSES OF THE CHRISTMAS WEEK SLUMP

Here are some of the possible causes of the business slump during the days before Christmas: The payment December 15 of a second installment of the 1944 taxes; the influenza epidemic; the inability of people to make quick purchases as a result of the jam at the stores, leaving them little time for taking the family to the picture show; the high cost of everything, draining the family's pocket, and above all the poor quality of most pictures.

"Son of Russia" with Robert Taylor and Susan Peters

(MGM, no release date set; time, 107 min.)

Lavishly produced, "Song of Russia" is a sensitive and stirring account of Russia at peace and at war, told in terms of an appealing romance between a famed American symphony orchestra conductor and a cultured Russian peasant girl. It is the type of picture the masses should enjoy, for it deals with people whose actions and emotions they can understand. Music lovers should find the music by Tschaikowsky and by modern Russian composers a treat. The performances are exceptionally good, particularly that of Susan Peters; she makes the character of the peasant girl so real and so lovable that one's interest in her welfare is held throughout. The first half of the film concerns itself with the romance amid gay and charming surroundings. This mood serves to accentuate the inhumanity of the Nazi invasion, which takes place in the second half. Several of the situations will draw tears. One such situation is where a Russian youngster is strafed by a Nazi plane, dying in his father's arms; few patrons, after witnessing this, will remain with dry eyes:—

Arriving in Russia for a symphonic tour, Robert Taylor, famed American conductor, is approached by Susan Peters, who unsuccessfully attempts to speak to him. Later, at a rehearsal, she sneaks on stage and attracts his attention by playing a brilliant piano solo. Speaking on behalf of music students in Tschaikowskoe, a tiny Russian village, which celebrated a music festival each year, Susan pleads with Taylor to include the festival on his tour. Both are drawn to one another, and together they see the sights of Moscow. Taylor declares his love for her, but Susan, believing that their different backgrounds would not make for an harmonious marriage, returns home. Several months later Taylor visits the village, and after a whirlwind courtship overrules Susan's objections and marries her. They spend their honeymoon on his concert tour. When the Nazis attack Russia, Susan expresses her desire to return to her family. Taylor, being in sympathy with her desire to help her people, agrees that she go while he completes the tour. At the conclusion of his final concert, Taylor learns that the Nazis are closing in on the village. Worried about Susan, he secures passage to Tschaikowskoe as a musician going to the front to entertain soldiers. Taylor manages to reach the village after a series of adventures, and finds it in ruins as the result of shelling and the scorched-earth policy. He searches frantically for Susan and finds her setting fire to the wheat fields. Angered by the Nazi's brutality, he determines to stay in Russia to fight the invaders. But a kindly priest points out that he and Susan can contribute more by returning to the United States. Back in America, Taylor, with Susan playing the piano, devotes himself to telling of Russia's great fight through his inspiring music.

Paul Jarrico and Richard Collins wrote the screen play, Joseph Pasternak produced it, and Gregory Ratoff directed it. The cast includes Robert Benchley, John Hodiak, Felix Bressart, Michael Chekhov, Darryl Hickman, Jacqueline White and others.

Morally suitable for all.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

Vol. XXVI

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1944

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 Texas Rangers in Fighting Valley—PRC
 (59 min.)not reviewed

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 (59 min.)not reviewed
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Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

5024 Return of the Vampire—Lugosi.....Nov. 11
 5017 There's Something About a Soldier—
 Keyes-NealNov. 30
 5009 The Heat's On—West-Moore-Gaxton.....Dec. 2
 5021 Crime Doctor's Strangest Case—
 Baxter-HobartDec. 9
 Klondike Kate—Neal-SavageDec. 16
 Cowboy in the Clouds—Starrett.....Dec. 23
 5005 What a Woman!—Russell-AherneDec. 28
 The Racket Man—Neal-BatesJan. 18
 Swing Out the Blues—Haymes-Merrick.....Jan. 20
 Beautiful But Broke—Davis-Frazee.....Jan. 28

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

(Block 2—release dates are tentative)

413 Thousands Cheer—Grayson-KellyJanuary
 414 Cross of Lorraine—Aumont.....January
 415 Lost Angel—O'Brien-CraigJanuary
 416 A Guy Named Joe—Tracy-Dunne.....February
 417 Cry "Havoc"—Sullivan-SothornFebruary
 418 Rationing—Beery-MainFebruary
 419 Broadway Rhythm—Murphy-SimmsMarch
 420 See Here, Private Hargrove—Walker-Reed....March
 421 Heavenly Body—Powell-Lamarr.....March
 422 Song of Russia—Taylor-PetersApril
 423 Swing Fever—Kay KyserApril
 490 Madame Curie—Garson-PidgeonApril

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

1942-43

228 What a Man—Downs-McKayJan. 31
 (End of 1942-43 Season)

1943-44

308 Melody Parade—Quillan-HughesAug. 27
 307 Spotlight Scandals—Fay-GilbertSept. 24
 309 The Unknown Guest—Jory-BlakeOct. 22

- 351 Texas Kid—J. M. Brown (57 m.).....Nov. 26
361 Death Valley Rangers—Trail Blazers (56 m.)..Dec. 3
310 Mr. Muggs Steps Out—East Side Kids.....Dec. 10
304 Women in Bondage—Patrick-Kelly (re.).....Jan. 10
302 Where Are Your Children—Storm-Cooper
(re.).....Jan. 17
362 Westward Bound—Trail Blazers (54 m.).....Jan. 17
888 The Sultan's Daughter—Corio-Butterworth
(re.).....Jan. 24
352 Raiders of the Border—J. M. Brown.....Jan. 31
315 Sweethearts of the U. S. A.—Merkel-Novis
(re.).....Feb. 7
317 Charlie Chan in the Secret Service—Toler (re.)..Feb. 14
Voodoo Man—Lugosi-Carradine.....Feb. 21
Million Dollar Kid—East Side Kids.....Feb. 28
301 Lady Let's Dance—Belita.....Mar. 7

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(Block 3—no national release dates)

- 4311 Henry Aldrich Boy Scout—Lydon.....
4312 Miracle of Morgan's Creek—Bracken-Hutton.....
4313 Timber Queen—Arlen-Hughes.....
4314 Standing Room Only—Goddard-MacMurray.....
4315 The Uninvited—Millard-Hussey.....
Special
4338 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman.....

Producers Releasing Corp. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

- 461 The Drifter—Buster Crabbe No. 3 (60 m.)...Dec. 20
407 Jive Junction—Moore-Thayer.....Dec. 20
453 Gunsmoke Mesa—Texas Rangers No. 3
(59 m.).....Jan. 3
Career Girl—Langford-Norris.....Jan. 11
Nabonga—Crabbe-D'Orsay.....Jan. 25
462 Buster Crabbe No. 4.....Jan. 27
454 Outlaw Roundup—Texas Rangers No. 4.....Feb. 10
Men On Her Mind—Hughes-North.....Feb. 12

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway New York 19, N. Y.)

- 303 Here Comes Elmer—Al Pearce.....Nov. 15
376 Overland Mail Robbery—Elliott (55 m.)...Nov. 20
306 Deerslayer—Kellogg-Parker.....Nov. 22
304 Mystery Broadcast—Albertson-Terry.....Nov. 23
305 Drums of Fu Manchu—Brandon-Boyle.....Nov. 27
364 Canyon City—Barry (54 m.).....Nov. 29
307 In Old Oklahoma—Scott-Dekker-Wayne.....Dec. 6
310 Pistol Packin' Mama—Terry-Livingston.....Dec. 15
352 Raiders of Sunset Pass—Eddie Dew (56 m.)..Dec. 20
365 California Joe—Barry (55 m.).....Dec. 29
309 Whispering Footsteps—Hubbard-Quigley.....Dec. 30
308 O, My Darling Clementine—Albertson-Gray..Dec. 31
353 Pride of the Plains—Livingston (56 m.)....Jan. 5
341 Hands Across the Border—Roy Rogers (73m.)..Jan. 5
Rootin' Tootin' Rhythm—Gene Autry
(reissue).....Jan. 15
Women in War—Elsie Janis (reissue).....Jan. 25

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No national release dates on features)

Block 3

- 411 Around the World—Kyser-Davis.....
412 The Ghost Ship—Richard Dix.....
413 Tarzan's Desert Mystery—Weissmuller-Kelly.....
414 Rookies in Burma—Brown-Carnay.....
415 Higher and Higher—Sinatra-Haley-Morgan.....

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

- 415 Happy Land—Ameche-Dee.....Dec. 3
416 The Gang's All Here—Faye-Miranda.....Dec. 24
The Lodger—Sanders-Oberon.....Jan. 7
Lifeboat—Bankhead-Lee.....Jan. 21

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Bar 20—Hopalong (54 m.).....Oct. 1
Jack London—O'Shea-Hayward.....Dec. 24

- Woman of the Town—Dekker-Trevor.....Dec. 31
Three Russian Girls—Sten-Smith.....Jan. 14
Knickerbocker Holiday—Eddy-Coburn.....Jan. 28
Bridge of San Luis Rey—Bari-Calhern.....Feb. 11
It Happened Tomorrow—Powell-Darnell.....Feb. 25
Voice in the Wind—Lederer-Gurie.....Mar. 10

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 8041 She's For Me—Bruce-McDonald (re.).....Dec. 10
8026 Calling Dr. Death—Chaney-Morison (re.)..Dec. 17
8025 Moonlight in Vermont—Gloria Jean.....Dec. 24
Gung Ho!—Randolph Scott.....Dec. 31
8034 Sing a Jingle—Allan Jones.....Jan. 7
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves—Montez-Hall..Jan. 14
8021 Spider Woman—Rathbone-Sondergaard....Jan. 21
8083 Marshal of Gunsmoke—Tex Ritter (58 m.)..Jan. 21
Phantom Lady—Tone-Raines.....Jan. 28
8020 Swingtime Johnny—Andrews Sisters.....Feb. 4
The Imposter—Gabin-Whorf.....Feb. 11
Weekend Pass—O'Driscoll-Beery, Jr.Feb. 18
Chip Off the Old Block—O'Connor-Ryan...Feb. 25

Warner-First National Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 308 Old Acquaintance—Davis-Hopkins.....Nov. 27
327 Crime School—Bogart (reissue) (86 m.)....Dec. 4
328 Girls on Probation—Reagan (reissue) (63m.)..Dec. 4
309 Destination Tokyo—Grant-Garfield.....Jan. 1
310 The Desert Song—Morgan-Manning.....Jan. 29

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE

Columbia—One Reel

- 5752 Way Down Yonder in the Corn—Fox & Crow
(7½ m.).....Nov. 25
5655 Community Sings No. 5 (10 m.).....Nov. 25
5804 Ten Pin Aces—Sports (10 m.).....Nov. 26
5703 The Playful Pest—Phantasies (6½ m.)....Dec. 3
5855 Screen Snapshots No. 5 (9 m.).....Dec. 17
5656 Community Sings No. 6.....Dec. 24
5657 Community Sings No. 7.....Dec. 24
5805 Winged Targets—Sports.....Dec. 24
5503 The Herring Murder Mystery—Col. Rhap...Dec. 30
5704 Polly Wants a Doctor—Phantasies.....Jan. 6
5954 Film Vodvil No. 4.....Jan. 7
5903 Camera Revelations—Panoramics.....Jan. 14
5856 Screen Snapshots No. 6.....Jan. 14
5601 Amoozin' But Confoozin'—Li'l Abner.....Jan. 28
5806 The Swing's the Thing—Sports.....Feb. 4
5705 Magic Strength—Phantasies.....Feb. 4
5753 The Dream Kids—Fox & Crow.....Feb. 5

Columbia—Two Reels

- 5410 Who's Hugh?—Herbert (15½ m.).....Dec. 17
5161 The Sign of the Skull—The Phantom (30m.)..Dec. 17
5162 The Man Who Never Dies—Phantom (20m.)..Dec. 24
5404 A Gem of a Jam—Stooges (17 m.).....Dec. 30
5163 A Traitor's Code—Phantom (20 m.).....Dec. 31
5164 The Seat of Judgment—Phantom (20 m.)...Jan. 7
5165 The Ghost Who Walks—Phantom (20 m.)..Jan. 14
5431 To Heir is Human—Merkel.....Jan. 14
5432 Dr. Feel My Pulse—Vera Vague.....Jan. 21
5166 Jungle Whispers—Phantom (20 m.).....Jan. 21
5167 The Mystery Well—Phantom (20 m.).....Jan. 21
5168 In Quest of the Keys—Phantom (20 m.)....Jan. 28
5405 Crash Goes the Hash—Stooges.....Feb. 5
5169 The Fire Princess—Phantom (20 m.).....Feb. 5
5170 The Emerald Key—Phantom (20 m.).....Feb. 12
5171 The Fangs of the Beast—Phantom (20 m.)..Feb. 19
5172 The Road To Zoloz—Phantom (20 m.).....Feb. 26
5173 A Lost City—Phantom (20 m.).....Mar. 4
5174 Peace in the Jungle—Phantom (20 m.)....Mar. 11

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel

1942-43

- K-490 This Is Tomorrow—Passing Parade (11m.)..Nov. 27
W-454 What's Buzzin' Buzzard—Cartoon (8 m.)..Nov. 27
S-474 Water Wisdom—Pete Smith (9 m.).....Nov. 27
W-455 Baby Puss—Cartoon (8 m.).....Dec. 25
(More to come)

1943-44

- T-511 Through the Colorado Rockies—Traveltalk
(10 m.).....Oct. 23

T-512 Grand Canyon, Pride of Creation—Traveltalk
(9 m.) Nov. 27
T-513 Salt Lake Diversion—Traveltalk (9 m.) Dec. 25
S-551 Practical Joker—Pete Smith Jan. 8
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels
A-402 Heavenly Music—Special (22 m.) May 1
A-403 Shoe Shine Boy—Special (20 m.) Dec. 25

Paramount—One Reel

L3-1 Unusual Occupations No. 1 (10 m.) Nov. 12
R3-2 Ozark Sportsmen—Spotlight (9 m.) Nov. 19
E3-1 Her Honor the Mare—Popeye (7 m.) Nov. 26
P3-1 No Mutton for Nuttin'—Noveltoons (7 m.) Nov. 26
U3-2 Good Night Rusty—Mad. Mod. (7 m.) Dec. 3
J3-2 Popular Science No. 2 (10 m.) Dec. 10
Y3-1 Tails of the Border—Speaking of Animals
(8 m.) Dec. 17
R3-3 G. I. Fun—Spotlight (9 m.) Dec. 24
D3-1 Eggs Don't Bounce—Little Lulu Dec. 24
E3-2 Marry Go Round—Popeye (8 m.) Dec. 31

Paramount—Two Reels

IF3-2 Caribbean Romance—Musical Parade (20m.) Dec. 17

RKO—One Reel

1942-43

34110 Home Defense—Disney (8 m.) Oct. 29
34111 Pelican and the Snipe—Disney Dec. 17
(More to come)

1943-44

44201 Flicker Flashbacks No. 1 (9 m.) Sept. 3
44301 Field Trial Champions—Sportscope (9 m.) Sept. 10
44202 Flicker Flashbacks No. 2 (9 m.) Oct. 1
44302 Joe Kirkwood—Sportscope (9 m.) Oct. 8
44203 Flicker Flashbacks No. 3 (9 m.) Oct. 29
44303 Stars and Strikes—Sportscope (9 m.) Nov. 5
44204 Flicker Flashbacks No. 4 (9 m.) Nov. 26
44304 Mountain Anglers—Sportscope (9 m.) Dec. 3
44205 Flicker Flashbacks No. 5 (9 m.) Dec. 24

RKO—Two Reels

43402 Unlucky Dog—Edgar Kennedy (15 m.) Nov. 12
43101 Sailors All—This is America (20 m.) Nov. 19
43204 Music Will Tell—Head. Rev. (18 m.) Dec. 3
43102 Letter to a Hero—This is America (18 m.) Dec. 17
43703 Wedtime Stories—Leon Errol (17½ m.) Dec. 24

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

4510 The Helicopter—Terrytoon (7 m.) Jan. 21
4155 Realm of Royalty—Magic Carpet (9 m.) Feb. 4
4511 The Wreck of the Hesperus—Terry. (7 m.) Feb. 11
4202 Silver Wings—Adventure (9 m.) Feb. 18
4512 A Day in June—Terrytoon (7 m.) Feb. 18
4153 Steamboat on the River—Magic Carpet (9m.) Mar. 10
4513 The Champion of Justice—Terrytoon (7 m.) Mar. 17
4201 Sails Aloft—Adventure (9 m.) Mar. 31

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

Vol. 10 No. 3 Youth in Crisis—March of Time
(18 m.) Nov. 5

Universal—One Reel

8354 Wings in Record Time—Var. Views (9 m.) Dec. 27
8355 Amazing Metropolis—Var. Views (9 m.) Jan. 17
8356 Magazine Model—Var. Views (9 m.) Jan. 24
8375 Mrs. Lowell Thomas, Fur Farmer—Per. Odd. Jan. 31

Universal—Two Reels

8124 Radio Melodies—Musical (15 m.) Dec. 29
8125 New Orleans Blues—Musical (15 m.) Jan. 26

Vitaphone—One Reel

1942-43

8725 Little Red Riding Habit—Mer. Mel. (re.)
(7 m.) Jan. 1
8726 What's Cookin' Doc—Mer. Mel. (re.) (7m.) Jan. 8
(End of 1942-43 Season)

1943-44

9301 A Feud There Was—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.) Sept. 11
9601 Hit Parade of the Gay Nineties—Mer. Mas.
(10 m.) Sept. 18
9402 Bees A' Buzzin—Varieties (10 m.) Sept. 18
9302 Early Bird Gets the Worm—Mer. Mel.
(reissue) (7 m.) Oct. 2
9501 Tropical Sport Land—Sports (10 m.) Oct. 9

9602 Sweetheart Serenade—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) Oct. 23
9303 My Little Buckaroo—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.) Nov. 6
9401 Alaskan Frontier—Varieties (10 m.) Nov. 6
9502 Desert Playground—Sports (10 m.) Nov. 13
9603 Cavalcade of the Dance—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) Nov. 20
9304 Fighting 69½—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.) Dec. 4
9604 Freddie Fisher & His Band—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.) Dec. 18
9403 Hunting the Devil Cat—Varieties (10 m.) Dec. 18
9503 Into the Clouds—Sports (10 m.) Jan. 1
9305 Cross Country Detours—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.) Jan. 15
9504 Baa Baa Blacksheep—Sports (10 m.) Jan. 22
9605 Ted Weems & Merchant Marine—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.) Jan. 29
9701 Meatless Fly Day—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Jan. 29
9306 Hiawatha's Rabbit Hunt—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.) Feb. 12
9702 Tom Turk & Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Feb. 12
9505 Dogie Round-up—Sports (10 m.) Feb. 26
9721 The Three Bears—Bugs Bunny (7 m.) Feb. 26
9703 I've Got Plenty of Mutton—Mer. Mel.
(7 m.) Mar. 11
9307 The Bear's Tale—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7m.) Mar. 11
9606 Songs of the Range—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) Mar. 18
9506 Chinatown Champs—Sports (10 m.) Mar. 18
9704 The Weakly Reporter—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Mar. 25
9404 Struggle for Life—Varieties (10 m.) Mar. 25

Vitaphone—Two Reels

9102 Over the Wall—Featurette (20 m.) Dec. 25
9109 Gun to Gun—Sante Fe Western (20 m.) Jan. 8
9103 Grandfather's Follies—Featurette (20 m.) Feb. 5
9004 The Devil Boats—Special (20 m.) Feb. 19
9110 Roaring Guns—Sante Fe Western (20 m.) Mar. 4

NEWSWEEKLY NEW YORK RELEASE DATES

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45238 Wed. (E) .. Jan. 5
45139 Sat. (O) .. Jan. 8
45240 Wed. (E) .. Jan. 12
45141 Sat. (O) .. Jan. 15
45242 Wed. (E) .. Jan. 19
45143 Sat. (O) .. Jan. 22
45244 Wed. (E) .. Jan. 26
45145 Sat. (O) .. Jan. 29
45246 Wed. (E) .. Feb. 2
45147 Sat. (O) .. Feb. 5
45248 Wed. (E) .. Feb. 9
45149 Sat. (O) .. Feb. 12

Paramount News

35 Sun. (O) Jan. 2
36 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 6
37 Sun. (O) Jan. 9
38 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 13
39 Sun. (O) Jan. 16
40 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 20
41 Sun. (O) Jan. 23
42 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 27
43 Sun. (O) Jan. 30
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45 Sun. (O) Feb. 6
46 Thurs. (E) .. Feb. 10
47 Sun. (O) Feb. 13

Fox Movietone

35 Tues. (O) ... Jan. 4
36 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 6
37 Tues. (O) ... Jan. 11
38 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 13
39 Tues. (O) ... Jan. 18
40 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 20
41 Tues. (O) ... Jan. 25
42 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 27
43 Tues. (O) ... Feb. 1
44 Thurs. (E) .. Feb. 3
45 Tues. (O) ... Feb. 8
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47 Tues. (O) ... Feb. 15

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Metrotone News

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234 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 6
235 Tues. (O) .. Jan. 11
236 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 13
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238 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 20
239 Tues. (O) .. Jan. 25
240 Thurs. (E) .. Jan. 27
241 Tues. (O) .. Feb. 1
242 Thurs. (E) .. Feb. 3
243 Tues. (O) .. Feb. 8
244 Thurs. (E) .. Feb. 10
245 Tues. (O) .. Feb. 15

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255 Wed. (O) .. Jan. 5
256 Fri. (E) Jan. 7
257 Wed. (O) .. Jan. 12
258 Fri. (E) Jan. 14
259 Wed. (O) .. Jan. 19
260 Fri. (E) Jan. 21
261 Wed. (O) .. Jan. 26
262 Fri. (E) Jan. 28
263 Wed. (O) .. Feb. 2
264 Fri. (E) Feb. 4
265 Wed. (O) .. Feb. 9
266 Fri. (E) Feb. 11

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No. 2

THE VALUE OF ORGANIZATION

Mr. Maxwell A. Alderman, executive secretary of Allied Theatres of Connecticut, said the following in the organization's "Service Bulletin" of December 24:

"If I were an independent exhibitor with all the years of experience that goes with the business, I would sit down and ponder as to how I could better my lot in the future. In making my New Year Resolution, I would wonder whether I was helping myself as well as other independent exhibitors. Petty, fancied, personal grievances or jealousies should be set aside for the larger overall part I should play in my business in the future. I would, after thinking for awhile, make up my mind that every independent exhibitor owes it to himself to join a truly independent trade association. There may be individuals who believe that they are self-sufficient and can go it alone, but they are only kidding themselves. The time is coming and soon, when they will find out for themselves that they are a part, however small, in this business. The outside forces will continue to pound, so that the shell into which you have withdrawn, will eventually crack and you will find yourself alone to battle for your very existence. I would ask myself how far I could get if I set out to adjust tax or other legislative matters both in Congress and in our own state? And these problems are multiplied many times over during the course of the year (just remember two men in a booth and other legislative proposals in our own legislature the past several years.)"

I wanted to write something to support Mr. Alderman's appeal as to the value of organization and then I remembered that I had written something on the subject in the first issue of 1932. I read it and felt that nothing more appropriate could be written on the subject. So I have decided to reprint as much of it as applies to the present conditions:

"Business to thrive needs protection.

"One of the greatest protecting factors is organization. When the members of a particular business are organized, they are able to put up an effective defense against all hostile forces.

"And yet, in the exhibiting branch of the moving picture business, there is no other factor in greater disrepute than is organization. Though it is an insurance, most exhibitors consider it a nuisance. And they commit the gravest of abuses toward it. I have heard of a case in which an organization spent five hundred dollars to protect the interests of an exhibitor. It saved him seventy-five dollars a week, the total amount he saved in the seven years he kept his theatre being more than twenty-five thousand dollars. And yet this exhibitor refused, not only to reimburse the organization for

whatever money it had spent, but even to pay his dues.

"This is only one case of ingratitude; I could go on filling page after page, in some of them the exhibitor betraying ingratitude just as unbelievable.

"What makes many exhibitors so blind to the need of organization? Let us study nature itself for a lesson: Animals, birds, insects, fish; in fact all living organisms, travel in groups, for they know by instinct that protection lies in grouping. Cattle, when attacked by wolves, post themselves back to back to fight off the attackers. The outcome would be obvious were they to attempt to fight them singly. It was several centuries before Christ that one of the Greek philosophers pointed out to mankind the need of organization most convincingly: Aesop, in one of his fables, showed to the Greeks how easy it was to break a bundle of sticks a stick at a time, and how difficult to break them as a bundle."

The best illustration of the value of organization is the present increase in the theatre ticket tax: The Allied leaders did everything there was in their power to convince Congress that the motion picture is, not a luxury, but a necessity. Unfortunately they did not have the full support of every exhibitor in the country, if we are the judge by their inability to prevent the increase of the tax. Had they been backed up by the exhibitors one hundred per cent, the story might have been different.

The proof that these leaders have not had the support of the majority of the exhibitors, Allied members and not, may be gathered by an incident in another issue where full exhibitor support was needed. I am referring to the fact that, out of thousands of questionnaires that were sent by Allied States Association to exhibitors at large, members and non-members, on their experiences under the Consent Decree, only a small percentage replied.

Many exhibitors, members of an exhibitor unit, pay their dues promptly, but there is a large number of them who either don't pay them, or do so reluctantly; they feel as if they are asked to contribute to charity. They forget that the exhibitors who head the organization, with the exception of the secretaries, work for nothing. In most instances all they get is abuse.

If you are not a member of a regional unit, you should become one at once; if you are already a member and you are behind in your dues, sit down at once and make out a check. It is the best encouragement you can give to those who are trying to protect the interests of all exhibitors unselfishly. HARRISON'S REPORTS prefers that you join an Allied unit, but if for some reason you are unwilling to do so, join any unit, but do join!

"The Lodger" with Merle Oberon, Laird Cregar and George Sanders

(20th Century-Fox, Jan. 7; time, 84 min.)

An interesting murder mystery melodrama. The story, which is more or less a character study of a maniacal murderer, takes place in London at the turn of the century, during the period of the famous "Jack the Ripper" murders that terrorized the populace. Though one becomes aware early in the picture of the murderer's identity, one is held in suspense because of the constant danger to the heroine who, unaware of his maniacal tendencies, is fascinated by his queer mannerisms. The London fog and the darkened streets give the proceedings an effective eerie atmosphere. Laird Cregar, as the murderer, overacts in spots, but on the whole he gives a creditable performance. Merle Oberon is quite charming as a Music Hall dancing star of that day:—

A series of murders, committed by a mysterious person known as "Jack the Ripper," terrorizes London and baffles Scotland Yard. Soon after the latest murder, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Sara Allgood, a middle-aged couple, rent a room to Laird Cregar, a peculiar but pleasant man, who identifies himself as a pathologist. As the "Ripper" continues his killings, Miss Allgood becomes suspicious of Cregar because of his unorthodox hours and weird movements. Hardwicke, however, dispels her fears by assuring her that all scientists were odd. Miss Allgood's house is brightened by the arrival of her niece, Merle Oberon, a saucy dancing star. Intrigued by Cregar's peculiarities, Merle invites him to the theatre. Cregar refuses, frankly telling her that he disliked actresses because they had ruined the life of his brother, whom he loved dearly. Merle is visited by Inspector George Sanders, who shows concern for her safety. He explains that the police had learned that the murder victims were at one time or other associated with the stage. When Sanders comes to the house one evening to escort Merle to the theatre, Miss Allgood informs him of Cregar's strange ways. Sanders investigates Cregar's quarters and discovers a fingerprint that matches that of the "Ripper." He is dismayed to learn that Cregar had accepted an invitation to attend that evening's performance. While Sanders and his men search for him, Cregar hides in Merle's dressing room. He locks the door when she enters and threatens to kill her, because of the evil of her beauty. As Cregar holds a dagger to her throat, Sanders bursts into the room and shoots him. Cregar, wounded, dashes out of the room and tries desperately to evade the police by hiding in the wings backstage. Cornered on a balcony, he leaps through a window and drowns in the Thames.

Barre Lyndon wrote the screen play, Robert Bassler produced it, and John Brahm directed it.

Not for children.

"Henry Aldrich, Boy Scout" with Jimmy Lydon, Charles Smith and Darryl Hickman

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 66 min.)

Although this latest of the "Henry Aldrich" program comedies is below par for the series, it should be received well by children, for most of the action revolves around boy scouts and their activities. Adults will probably find it of little interest, for the story, which deals with the now familiar trials and tribulations of "Henry," is trite and obvious. The comedy situations, too, will appeal more to youngster than to their elders. An old-fashioned cliff-hanging sequence, in which "Henry" saves the life of a junior scout, should thrill the kids:—

As senior patrol leader of Centerville Boy Scout Troop No. 1, Jimmy Lydon's chief ambition is to win a scout inspection, principally to impress Joan Mortimer, his girlfriend, and to best David Holt, leader of Centerville's Troop No. 2 and his rival for Joan's affections. Jimmy's father (John Litel), seeking to impress Minor Watson, wealthy manufacturer, that Centerville would be an ideal site for his new factory, induces Jimmy to take into the troop Darryl Hickman, Watson's unruly son. Troops one

and two go to a regional scout competition to compete for a pennant. Jimmy finds his troop trailing in the competition, chiefly because of Darryl's sly tricks. Jimmy tolerates the boy's pranks, but a bespectacled scout challenges Darryl to a fight and whips him. The beating changes Darryl's opinion of Scout life, and he determines to help the troop win the final event—a cross-country hike. Meanwhile Holt, determined to win, tampers with the compass of the Sunnygrove troop, which he considered his most dangerous competitor. As a result, the Sunnygrove troop loses its way, and Jimmy's troop wins the contest. Later, when the Sunnygrove troop reports that its compass had been tampered with, Jimmy accuses Darryl. The boy, heartbroken, runs away. Jimmy and Charles Smith, his pal, set out to find the boy. They locate him on a ledge above a deep ravine, where he had fallen. Risking his life, Jimmy saves him. Holt, repentant, admits his guilt and clears Darryl. Jimmy is rewarded for his heroism by an appointment as junior scout master.

Muriel Roy Bolton wrote the screen play, Michel Kraike produced it, and Hugh Bennett directed it. The cast includes Olive Blakeny, Richard Haydel and others.

"Standing Room Only" with Paulette Goddard, Fred MacMurray and Edward Arnold

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 83 min.)

A moderately amusing romantic comedy-farce. It will probably do better-than-average business because of the players' popularity. Based on a theme that has been done a number of times in recent pictures, the story, which is somewhat silly, treats farcically of present-day life in war-time Washington. The servant problem, the lodging shortage, and the difficulties encountered in attempting to obtain an interview with a busy official, are among the conditions ridiculed. It holds one's attention mainly because of engaging performances, fast-moving action, and lavish production. Occasionally, slapstick is resorted to for laughs. There is not much the characters do to awaken sympathy, but they are not objectionable:—

Fred MacMurray, manager of a toy factory owned by Edward Arnold, goes to Washington with Paulette Goddard, his secretary, to see an important official (Clarence Kolb) about a war contract. On arrival, Paulette cancels their hotel reservations because their rooms were without baths and, as a result, both spend the night sleeping in the park. On the following day, while MacMurray waits his turn to see Kolb, Paulette, determined to find rooms, applies to Roland Young in answer to his advertisement for servants, and represents both MacMurray and herself as a servant couple—he a butler, and she a cook. MacMurray, tired and sleepy, accepts the situation. Finding it difficult to obtain an interview with Kolb, MacMurray continues the masquerade in order that he have a place to sleep. MacMurray's opportunity to see Kolb comes when the official, a guest in Young's home, slyly asks MacMurray and Paulette to work for him. Kolb's wife, however, fires them on the first day, and they return to Young. Complications arise when Arnold, furious at the delay in obtaining the contract, arrives in Washington with Hillary Brooke, his daughter, who was MacMurray's fiancée. Hillary misunderstands his relationship with Paulette and breaks the engagement. Learning that Porter Hall, a competitor, had inveigled an invitation to a reception in Kolb's home, MacMurray and Arnold attend as butlers, in order to prevent Hall from securing the contract. MacMurray deliberately dumps a pot of soup over Kolb, and the official rushes to his room to change clothes. MacMurray follows him and hides his trousers, refusing to give them to him until he is heard. When both come downstairs, MacMurray holds the signed contract. With no reason to carry the masquerade further, MacMurray and Paulette rush into each other's arms to the amazement of the assembled guests.

Darrell Ware and Karl Tunberg wrote the screen play, Paul Jones produced it, and Sidney Lanfield directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Racket Man" with Tom Neal, Hugh Beaumont and Jeanne Bates

(Columbia, Jan. 21; time, 65 min.)

Just a minor program gangster melodrama, with a topical angle. The formula story has been given so hackneyed a treatment that one knows in advance just what is going to happen. Moreover, the production values are modest, and the players do not mean anything at the box-office. Even the performances are stilted, but the fault lies with the material and not with the players:—

On the eve of his induction into the army, Tom Neal, a notorious racketeer, bids farewell to a group of intimate friends, including Hugh Beaumont, a boyhood pal now a policeman; Larry Parks, a cub reporter; and Jeanne Bates, with whom both Neal and Beaumont were in love—all disliked Neal's "business," but loved Neal as a friend. As a soldier, Neal is insubordinate and surly, incurring the dislike of his entire platoon. When Tony Caruso, a sergeant, forfeits his chevrons by refusing to report Neal for an infraction of discipline, the racketeer changes his attitude and seeks to redeem himself. His request for overseas duty is denied for more important work—combating the "black market." Neal's superior explains that, because of his underworld "connections," his services would be invaluable. Accepting the confidential assignment, Neal is nominally discharged from the army, much to the dismay of his friends. Their unhappiness is increased by his apparent interest in his former racket. Working secretly, however, Neal is instrumental in exposing the "black market" operations of his former associates. Because of a series of "black market" articles written by Parks, Doug Fowley, a gangster leader, murders the reporter. Neal resolves to avenge his friend's death and goes to an abandoned warehouse in search of Fowley. Meanwhile Beaumont, zealously discharging his duty, mistakenly believes that Neal was responsible for Parks' death. He follows Neal. While Neal and Fowley stalk each other with drawn guns, Beaumont walks into the line of fire. Neal, to save his friend, deliberately stops a bullet, and fires point-blank at Fowley, killing him. As Neal lies dying, a government agent arrives and reveals to Beaumont and Jeanne that the racketeer was really a hero.

Paul Yawitz and Howard J. Green wrote the screen play, Wallace MacDonald produced it, and D. Ross Lederman directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"None Shall Escape" with Alexander Knox, Marsha Hunt and Henry Travers

(Columbia, February 3; time, 87 min.)

A powerful anti-Nazi drama. Although a few of the situations are a bit too stagy, it is on the whole a well made picture, with outstanding performances and a good directorial job. The time of the story is the future, after victory is won by the Allies, and it concerns itself with the post-war trial of an arrogant Nazi general, who had abused, murdered, and robbed the people of a tiny Polish village. While it is an emotionally stirring film, and one feels deep sympathy for those against whom the atrocities are committed, the action throughout is far from cheerful. One of the most powerful sequences is where a Jewish Rabbi exhorts his people to turn on their tormentors so that they, too, might die with them. Alexander Knox, as the Nazi general, is excellent. Whether or not your patrons desire this type of entertainment today is a matter that you must judge for yourself. It should be said, however, that "None Shall Escape" ranks with the better war films.

The story opens with the trial of Alexander Knox, charged with committing atrocious crimes against the people of Litzbark, a small Polish village. His accusers include Marsha Hunt, a schoolteacher; Henry Travers, a priest; and Erik Rolf, his brother. Their testimony reveals that Knox had returned to the village in 1919, after serving in World War I with the German Army, to resume his career as a schoolteacher. Embittered because of the German defeat, and because of Marsha's postponement of their marriage, Knox, in a moment of frenzy, had raped one of his pupils,

causing her to commit suicide. He had fled the infuriated villagers and had returned to Germany, where he had found haven in the happy home of his brother, who had been a newspaper editorial writer. He had become an ardent follower of Hitler, eventually reaching a high position in the Nazi party. Disturbed lest his brother's anti-Nazi views would become known to the party, thus embarrassing him, Knox had used his authority to jail Rolf. Six years later, Knox had led victorious Nazi troops into Litzbark, where he had maltreated the villagers, particularly the Jews, and had plundered their homes. Knox had on his staff Richard Crane, Rolf's son, in whom he had taken a special pride; the boy had become a thoroughly indoctrinated Nazi as a result of his teachings. Crane's interest in Dorothy Morris, Marsha's daughter, had angered Knox, for the girl had taught the boy to become more humane. He had committed the girl to a house of prostitution, where she had been shot in an attempted escape. Infuriated, Crane had torn off his Nazi decorations, and had entered Travers' church to attend Mass for Dorothy. As Crane prayed over Dorothy's prostrate form, Knox had shot him in the back. The trial ends with the Judge charging the jury, telling them that final victory lies in a people's justice.

Lester Cole wrote the screen play, Samuel Bischoff produced it, and Andre de Toth directed it. The cast includes Richard Hale and many others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Timber Queen" with Richard Arlen and Mary Beth Hughes

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 66 min.)

An undistinguished program comedy-melodrama, hampered by a story that creaks with age, and by obvious melodramatic situations. At times, the action is slowed down considerably by excessive dialogue. George E. Stone and Sheldon Leonard, as gangsters, provide the comedy, but much of it is too ridiculous to be effective. There is some excitement towards the finish, where Richard Arlen, in a low-flying plane, dynamites a dam and breaks up a log jam. The love interest, though pleasant, is incidental:—

Honorably discharged after serving in the South Pacific, Captain Richard Arlen seeks out Mary Beth Hughes, a cabaret singer, widow of a pal killed in action. Arlen learns that Tony Hughes, his unscrupulous business associate, held a \$30,000 mortgage on a rich lumber tract left to Mary by her husband, and that he planned to foreclose unless payment was made within sixty days. Arlen breaks relations with Hughes, and suggests to Mary that they pay off the mortgage by cutting and selling the timber on the land. June Havoc, Mary's pianist, induces Sheldon Leonard, her boy-friend, manager of a gambling club, to finance the logging operations with \$10,000 of the club's money, which he borrows without the knowledge of the club's gangster-owners. Hughes, determined to foreclose on the mortgage, arranges for two of his henchmen (Edmund MacDonald and Bill Haade) to join Arlen's logging crew to sabotage their operations. Meanwhile Leonard arrives at the camp to hide from the gangsters, who were after him for taking the money. As a result of MacDonald's sabotage, one of the men dies in an accident. Haade, claiming the work is too dangerous, incites the crew to quit, leaving Arlen without help. Leonard contacts the gangsters and convinces them that the only way for them to save their money was to pitch in and help cut the timber. Aided by the gangsters, Arlen finds that enough lumber will be cut to pay the mortgage within the allotted time. MacDonald, as a last desperate measure, dynamites the sides of a stream used for floating the logs, damming the water and creating a log jam. Attaching explosives to the bottom of his hydroplane, Arlen blasts the dam, and the rush of water breaks the jam, sending the logs on their way to the mill. The gangsters round up Hughes and his henchmen.

Maxwell Shane and Edward T. Lowe wrote the screen play, William Pine and William Thomas produced it, and Frank McDonald directed it. The cast includes Dick Purcell, Horace McMahon and others.

Morally suitable for all.

**"The Uninvited" with Ray Milland,
Ruth Hussey and Gail Russell**

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 98 min.)

An excellent ghost picture, with touches of rich humor. Since the story deals with the supernatural, it is, of course, fantastic, but it has been handled so expertly that the suspense does not let up for one moment. It should appeal to all classes of audiences, except perhaps children, who may find the proceedings a bit too deep. Credit is due Lewis Allen for his directorial skill in building up situations that hold one tense. An extremely thrilling, as well as chilling, situation is the one in which a fake seance is held to ease the troubled mind of a young girl, only to have the seance turn out as the "real" thing. Eerie effects have been used to good advantage. The performances of the cast are uniformly excellent. Gail Russell, a newcomer, has a charming personality and shows promise:—

Impressed with the beauty of a deserted mansion on a cliff high above the sea, Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey, his sister, buy it from Donald Crisp, the austere owner, despite his warning that the house was reputedly haunted. Gail Russell, Crisp's granddaughter, is disturbed by the sale. From a village tobacconist, Milland learns that Gail's mother had been mysteriously killed in a fall from the cliff, and that she was remembered as a saintly woman, while her artist-husband was recalled as a bad sort, who had carried on an affair with a Spanish model. The model, too, had died. After settling in the house, Milland and Ruth are almost frightened out of their wits by sorrowful wailings and by a strange cold, accompanied by an overpowering aroma of minosa, which permeated the house at odd times. Milland makes Gail's acquaintance and learns that she is obsessed with the thought that her mother's ghost lived in the house. Although forbidden by Crisp to set foot in the mansion, Gail defiantly visits Milland and Ruth. As she speaks with Milland in his studio, the strange cold and odor of minosa sweep into the room. Gail rushes out of the house and heads for the cliff, but Milland catches her as she is about to leap. She is treated for nervous shock by Alan Napier, a local physician. Milland conspires with the doctor to hold a fake seance to receive a "message" from Gail's mother, in order to ease the girl's mind. Both men are shocked when the seance proves to be the real thing—glasses are smashed; the cold and minosa scent fill the room; and Gail goes into a trance, jabbering in rapid gypsy Spanish. At that moment Crisp arrives in a rage and takes Gail home. Later, he sends her to an insane asylum operated by Cornelia Otis Skinner, who had been her mother's nurse. Meanwhile Milland and the doctor, disturbed by the supernatural doings, decide to investigate. They learn from old medical records that Gail is really the child of the Spanish model, and they deduce that the ghost of Gail's supposed mother, seeking vengeance, sought to impel Gail to hurl herself from the cliff; the ghost of the Spanish model, Gail's real mother, sought to hold her back. Milland rushes to the asylum to rescue Gail, only to learn that Miss Skinner, obviously bent on taking Gail's life, had sent the girl back to the mansion. Speeding back, Milland arrives in time to rescue Gail as she again rushes towards the cliff. When Gail is told of her identity, a happy laugh is heard from the ghost of the Spanish model, for the vengeful ghost had lost its power.

Dodie Smith and Frank Partos wrote the screen play from the novel by Dorothy Macardle. Charles Brackett produced it and Lewis Allen directed it.

**"The Miracle of Morgan's Creek" with
Betty Hutton, Eddie Bracken and
William Demarest**

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 100 min.)

This is a rowdy, romantic comedy, the kind that should go over well in crowded houses because of the gags and funny situations. It has a bizarre story, somewhat silly most of the time, but every one in the cast works hard to put it over, and whatever entertainment values the picture has are owed solely to their efforts. The action revolves around a fun-loving girl, who, sobering up after a "wild" party, recalls that she had married a soldier but cannot remember who he was. Her subsequent pregnancy, and the efforts of a simple, stuttering admirer to save her reputation result in a series of humorous complications, some of which will provoke hearty laughter. A good deal of the comedy is slapstick. In highly religious communities, patrons may resent the light treatment of marriage. Brian Donlevy and Akim Tamiroff are included in the cast, but they take a very minor part in the action:—

When William Demarest, Morgan Creek's only constable, forbids Betty Hutton, his elder daughter, to go to a soldiers' farewell party, she asks Eddie Bracken, a stuttering bank clerk, to take her to a movie. Bracken, madly in love with her, is thrilled. Betty, however, persuades him to go to the movie alone, and asks him to wait for her return from the party. She shows up on the following morning intoxicated, and Demarest blames Bracken for her condition. Sobered, Betty recalls that she had married a soldier, whose name she did not remember. Moreover, she did not have a marriage certificate. She shares her secret with Diana Lynn, her sophisticated young sister, who suggests that she marry Bracken. Betty rejects the idea. A month later, Betty learns that she is to have a baby. Worried lest Bracken be blamed, she confides in him. The young man conceives the idea of dressing as a soldier, and marrying Betty under a false name, in order that she may have a certificate to prove her marriage. They travel to another state for the ceremony, and all goes well until Bracken bungles, causing the Justice of the Peace (Porter Hall) to arrest him for abduction and impersonation of a soldier. Hall brings the young couple back to Morgan's Creek, where Demarest jails Bracken. Later, when Demarest learns the truth from Betty, he permits Bracken to escape in the hope that he will locate Betty's unknown husband. Months later, Bracken returns after a futile search and is arrested. Meanwhile Demarest, having lost his job, is living with his daughters on a farm. Learning of Bracken's capture, Betty insists upon going to town to clear him. Before she can confess, however, she is rushed to a hospital where she gives birth to sextuplets. Pleased at the fame brought to his state, Brian Donlevy, the governor, takes charge of matters and declares that Betty and Bracken were married legally by Hall. Bracken, believed to be the father, is acclaimed as a hero.

Preston Sturges wrote the screen play and directed it.

Although it treats morality lightly, it is not offensive.

**"Song of Russia" with Robert Taylor
and Susan Peters**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 107 min.)

In the review of this picture, printed in last week's issue, the title was reported as "Son of Russia" through a typographical error.

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**WEST COAST EXHIBITORS
OBJECT TO THEATRE OWNING
BY EXCHANGEMEN**

At a recent meeting of members of the Pacific Coast Conference of Independent Theatre Owners, a resolution was adopted condemning the ownership of theatres by persons connected with exchanges.

Part of the resolution reads as follows:

"WHEREAS, in recent years there has developed a vicious, unfair and inequitable practice by means of which some exhibitors seek to engage in unfair competition with others by taking into their theatrical exhibition enterprises persons who are in positions of trust and responsibility with said distributors and/or producers; and

"WHEREAS, a continuance of such practice and technique is regarded by this association as a form of commercial bribery, dishonesty, unfair trade practice and unfair competition, now therefore be it—

"RESOLVED, that any practice or technique whereby persons employed by distributors or producers are permitted to acquire, directly or indirectly, an interest in any motion picture theatre enterprise . . . is hereby condemned and considered dishonest, deceitful and fraudulent. . . ."

In following paragraphs, the resolution demands that the distributors take steps to put an end to such a practice by requiring of their employees a statement, sworn to before a notary public, that they have no interest whatever in any motion picture theatre served by the company.

HARRISON'S REPORTS has condemned this practice for years. Several years ago proof was submitted in some of the instances that exchangemen were in partnership with exhibitors, and the facts were published in these columns.

As a general rule, the producer-distributors object to their employees in the field owning either a whole or a part of a theatre, by reason of the fact that advantage is taken of them in the matter of film rentals. I know at least of one person who, when he read in HARRISON'S REPORTS that one of his branch managers was a partner in a picture theatre with other exchangemen, compelled him to divest himself of his theatre interest. That person was none other than Bill Rodgers, of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The executives of other companies, too, feel likewise, I am sure. So it is up to the exhibitors to present proof of an exchangeman's partnership in a theatre.

In the January 7 issue of *Motion Picture Daily*, Red Kann has a story to the effect that the producer-distributors have submitted to the Department of Justice on the Consent Decree certain proposals. Among these is an offer to freeze the number of theatres they own. I don't know whether this theatre freezing offer will have any effect upon theatre ownership by distributor employees. If it will not act as a preventive, then it is up to the exhibitor leaders to call the attention of Mr. Clark, Assistant Attorney General, to this form of abuse to the end that some clause may be incorporated in the Consent Decree making its continuance impossible.

**THE SMOULDERING EXHIBITOR
RESENTMENT ON REISSUES**

In the December 29 issue of "The Exhibitor" (New York, Philadelphia, Washington), Jay Emanuel, editor, published on the subject of reissues an editorial that is so full of dynamite that HARRISON'S REPORTS takes the liberty of reproducing it in full. Mr. Emanuel, being a publisher of the Jay Emanuel Publications, is an exhibitor himself, owner of several theatres: therefore he knows what he is talking about:

"There seems to be a mistaken impression in some circles (not this department) that exhibitors are not only able to ease their tight booking difficulties by playing reissues and repeats, but that they are coining money with them besides. It is not difficult to figure out that because a few reissues have been strong grossers the belief has grown that all of them are, and this view is shared only by the sales departments.

"There used to be a time when exhibitors would be able to book reissues at their own discretion and practically their own terms. The exchanges, with plenty of product on hand, didn't pay much attention to the reissues, and concentrated on the payoff of the annual product, looking at the reissue or repeat business as extra gravy. Thus, every once in a while, exhibitors would discover that in a reissue rested some additional money. The exchange, while learning of this fact, would figure the exhibitor would be entitled to whatever he made, and let it go on that.

"But since the amount of new product has lessened, the distributors have begun to watch every avenue of revenue closely. First, they removed any possibility of 'sleepers' appearing. By testing product, watching every release, the distributors made it impossible for

(Continued on last page)

"You're a Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith" with Allan Jones and Evelyn Ankers

(Universal, October 22; time, 64 min.)

A dull program comedy, with music, in which someone bursts into song at the slightest provocation; it may get by as a supporting feature in situations where audiences are not too discriminating. The story, which is unimaginative and is quite familiar, concerns itself with the plight of an heiress, who has difficulties with her soldier-husband after he learns that she had married him for the sole purpose of satisfying a condition of her uncle's will. Few of the situations provoke more than a grin. The music is sung by Allan Jones, Patsy O'Connor, and the King's Men. Billie Burke is wasted in a minor part:—

Accompanied by Patsy O'Connor, her younger sister, Evelyn Ankers entrains for Chicago, where she plans to marry David Bruce, a prudish socialite, merely to comply with a condition of her uncle's will, which required that she be married by her twenty-fourth birthday in order to receive a \$95,000 inheritance. On the train, Evelyn makes the acquaintance of Allan Jones, one of a group of soldiers. Patsy, **opposed to the idea of Evelyn's marrying Bruce, decides to do something about it.** She feigns an attack of measles, thus compelling the conductor to side-track and quarantine the railroad car in which Evelyn, the soldiers and she had accommodations. Evelyn, realizing that she will not reach Chicago in time to save her inheritance, tricks Jones into marrying her aboard the train. Patsy, pleased at this turn of events, clears up the measles hoax, and the journey is resumed. To make Jones keep his distance, Evelyn frankly tells him of her motive in marrying him, and announces that she will seek an annulment. Jones, however, finds himself holding the upper hand when the terms of the will reveal that Evelyn cannot spend any part of her fortune without her husband's consent. He refuses to countersign checks for her, thereby causing her no end of grief with her creditors. Jones eventually agrees not to contest the annulment, providing Evelyn places her money in a trust fund for her future security. When the judge unexpectedly denies the annulment, Evelyn discovers for the first time that she really loves Jones.

Lawrence Riley, Ben Barzman, and Louis Lantz wrote the screen play, Edward Lilley produced it and Felix Feist directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Beautiful But Broke" with Joan Davis, Jane Frazee and John Hubbard

(Columbia, January 28; time, 74 min.)

Just a moderately entertaining program comedy with music. It should appeal mainly to young people because the music and dancing are of the popular "jitterbug" variety. Adults will find little to attract them, for the story is inane and much of the comedy is slapstick. Joan Davis manages to provoke hearty laughter occasionally, but for the most part she is hampered by the weakness of the material. By far the best part of the picture is the slapstick comedy act of Willie West, and McGinty; their antics, while building a house, should cause riotous laughter. The production could stand some judicious cutting:—

Discouraged because a talent shortage interfered with his operations, John Eldredge, an agent, gives his business to Joan Davis, his secretary, then joins the army. Joan contacts Jane Frazee and Judy Clark, her pals, and makes them her partners. When a Cleveland theatre owner comes to the office, in search of an orchestra, the girls, through trickery, secure an engagement for a non-existent band. Joan manages to form a band made up of girls, and all head for Cleveland. En route, they are put off the train to make room for army pilots. They go to a hotel as guests of the railroad, only to be evicted by the management when Joan, who had lost her purse, is unable to produce the railroad tickets. They find an empty house a few miles from town and decide to spend the

night there, unaware that it was located on a proving ground for high explosives. After narrowly escaping with their lives as a result of shelling, the girls are taken in hand by John Hubbard, an engineer, who takes them to town and gives them the use of his apartment. To raise funds for Hubbard's pet project—a baby station to care for infants, while their mothers work in defense plants—the girls put on a show. The townspeople take them to their hearts, and the girls decide to stay until Joan raises the necessary funds to take them to Cleveland. By the time Joan's pocketbook is found, Jane and Hubbard fall in love, and the other girls decide to remain as defense workers to help win the war. With no band to accompany her, Joan, too, decides to remain.

Monte Brice wrote the screen play, Irving Briskin produced it, and Charles Barton directed it. The cast includes Bob Haymes, Byron Foulger and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" with Jon Hall and Maria Montez

(Universal, January 14; time, 87 min.)

Lavishly produced and photographed in Technicolor, this mixture of adventure, romance, and comedy should delight the youngsters, as well as the adult action fans. Like "Arabian Nights," its predecessor, this, too, has a mythical story, based on a famous fable. Ancient Bagdad is the setting, and the brilliant-hued costumes, enhanced by the color photography, give the film a pageantry-like quality. The thrilling situations are many. But it is in the closing scenes, where Ali Baba and his band of thieves come to the rescue of the heroine and rout the Mongols, that the excitement reaches its highest pitch. Jon Hall is quite dashing as Ali Baba, and Maria Montez very "fetching" as the girl in distress. Andy Devine, as one of the thieves, handles the comedy fairly well. Wherever "Arabian Nights" proved successful, this, too, should go over:—

Aided by Prince Cassim (Frank Puglia), a traitor, Hulagu Khan (Kurt Katch), leader of the Mongols, murders the Caliph of Bagdad and seizes the city. Ali (Scotty Beckett), the Caliph's son, escapes into the hills with the seal of Bagdad. There he comes upon a horde of thieves, led by Baba (Fortunio Bonanova). Ali makes his identity known and offers to lead the thieves against Khan. Admiring the boy's spunk, Baba names him Ali Baba and takes him into the band. Ten years later, with Bagdad despoiled by the Mongols, only the thieves led by Ali (Jon Hall) still resist Khan. When a scout reports a rich caravan bearing Amara (Maria Montez), Cassim's daughter and future bride of Khan's, Ali and Abdullah (Andy Devine) ride to investigate. Ali is captured by the Mongols, but Abdullah escapes to warn the thieves. Caged and hauled to Bagdad, Ali is placed in the public square to await death. The thieves, however, swoop into the square and rescue Ali, who in turn kidnaps Amara and takes her to his secret cave. When Amara learns of Ali's identity, and Ali realizes that Amara is Cassim's daughter, both recall that as children they had pledged themselves to each other. Ali's love for Amara overcomes his desire for revenge against Cassim and Khan. He sends her back to Bagdad. When Jamiel (Turhan Bey), Amara's faithful servant, comes to Ali and informs him that Amara is marrying Khan against her will, Ali determines to rescue her. He disguises himself as a wealthy merchant and, on the day of the wedding feast, hides his men in forty large jars supposedly containing fine oils, and joins a procession of wealthy merchants and princes bearing gifts to Khan. Within the palace gates the thieves, at a given signal, pounce upon Khan's guards, while Bagdad's citizens rise in revolt. The Mongols are destroyed by the surprise attack, and Ali is restored to his rightful place as Caliph.

Edmund L. Martman wrote the screen play, Paul Malvern produced it, and Arthur Lubin directed it. The cast includes Yvette Dugay, Moroni Olsen, Ramsay Ames and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Lifeboat" with Tallulah Bankhead, William Bendix and Henry Hull

(*Twentieth Century-Fox; January 21; time, 96 min.*)

Very good! Although somewhat depressing because of its depiction of human suffering, this drama tells an absorbing tale of six men and three women, each with varied backgrounds, who survive the torpedoing of a ship and are cast adrift in a lifeboat for many torturous days. The story combines heart interest, romance, murder, and mystery, and deals with the survivors' gradual disintegration under the strain of extreme hardships and personal conflicts. The film is unusual in that, throughout its ninety-six minutes running time, all the action takes place within the confines of the lifeboat; and yet it holds one's interest tightly, for the construction of the plot is skillful, the acting of the highest order, and Alfred Hitchcock's direction so expert that he keeps one in a high pitch of excitement from beginning to end:—

Only one lifeboat remains afloat after the sinking of a freighter by a Nazi sub, which in turn had been sunk by the freighter's gun crew. The survivors include Tallulah Bankhead, a sharp-witted, chic journalist; John Hodiak, a hardy, outspoken engine crew member; Hume Cronyn, a radio operator; William Bendix, a sailor with a wounded leg; Henry Hull, a wealthy industrialist; Canada Lee, a colored steward; Heather Angel, a half-crazed woman with a dead baby; and Walter Slezak, Nazi captain of the sunken submarine. Despite Hodiak's demands that Slezak be thrown overboard, the others permit him to stay. Miss Angel, grief-stricken over the baby's death, jumps overboard while the others sleep. In the course of events, all come to depend on Slezak, a cold, calculating person, despite their hatred for him. When Bendix's life is threatened by gangrene, Slezak amputates his leg, and when a powerful wind blows the boat out of control the Nazi saves all their lives by his quick thinking. After many days without food and water, all except Slezak feel the effects of hunger and thirst. They accept his leadership, fully aware that he will lead them to a Nazi supply ship. One night, as the others sleep, Slezak pushes Bendix overboard when the crippled sailor catches him drinking from a hidden flask. Bendix's cries awaken the others, who suspect Slezak and discover the water flask. Mute with anguish at his cold-bloodedness, they hurl themselves at the Nazi, beat him severely, and throw him overboard. All are grateful when a ship hoves in sight, even though it is Nazi. A sudden flash over the horizon, followed by an explosion near the ship, reveals to them the presence of an Allied cruiser. They narrowly miss death when the Nazi ship tries to run them down before it disintegrates in a terrific explosion. All wait patiently to be rescued by the cruiser.

Jo Swerling wrote the screen play from an original story by John Steinbeck, and Kenneth Macgowan produced it.

Adult entertainment.

"Million Dollar Kid" with the East Side Kids

(*Monogram, February 28; time, 64 min.*)

This program comedy should have no trouble pleasing the followers of the "East Side Kids." Like the previous pictures in the series, this, too, depends for its laughs on the rowdy antics of the "Kids," led by Leo Gorcey. The story, though thin, is somewhat more appealing than that of any of the other pictures, for this time the "Kids" set out to clear their neighborhood of ruffians. In the process, they help to regenerate a thrill-seeking youth, son of a millionaire, who had taken up with shady companions:—

Attacked by hoodlums, Herbert Heyes, a millionaire, is rescued by the East Side Kids. Heyes shows his appreciation by inviting the boys to his mansion and giving them the use of a fully equipped gymnasium, which, he explains, was never used by Johnny Duncan, his 'teen-aged son. While searching for Heyes' attackers, the boys discover that one

of the hoodlums was Johnny, who had taken up with bad companions for the thrill. The boys keep their discovery from Heyes and try to reform Johnny, but the young man refuses their counsel. The Kids are at Heyes' mansion one afternoon when word comes that the millionaire's elder son had been killed in action. Heyes, upset by the news, suffers a heart attack, and the Kids go in search of Johnny. They find him in a poolroom and take him back to the gymnasium, where Gorcey whips him in a boxing match to cool him down. News of his brother's death and of his father's heart attack, make Johnny see the error of his ways. He joins the boys in capturing the ruffians who had attacked his father, and admits to the police his part in the crime. The Kids, however, manage to get him absolved.

Frank Young wrote the story and screen play, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and Wallace Fox directed it. The cast includes Huntz Hall, Gabriel Dell, Billy Benedict, Louise Currie, Noah Beery, Sr., Mary Gordon, Iris Adrian and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"There's Something About a Soldier" with Tom Neal, Evelyn Keyes and Bruce Bennett

(*Columbia, November 30; time, 81 min.*)

This comedy-drama, which deals with the training of soldiers at Officers' Candidate School, is entertaining program fare. The story itself is the familiar one about the "cocky" soldier, disliked by his fellows, who eventually is made to see the error of his ways. The good treatment given the production, however, more than compensates for the lightweight plot. The gruelling training undergone by the soldiers is presented in an interesting way, with rich touches of humor. Credit is due the producer for giving the story a logical ending: The hero is expelled from school for an act unbecoming an officer and gentleman, even though it was done in self-sacrifice. He does, however, win the girl. The performances and direction are good:—

Soon after his arrival at Officers' Candidate School, Tom Neal, a glib ex-newspaperman, incurs the dislike of his fellow squad members, because of his "cockiness" and of his refusal to join them in helping each other with their studies. A rivalry springs up between Neal and Bruce Bennett, a serious-minded soldier, when both vie for the attentions of Evelyn Keyes, civilian secretary at the school. Unknown to Neal, but known to Evelyn, Bennett had seen service in North Africa, and had won his appointment through distinguished service. When Evelyn berates Neal for his attitude towards Bennett and the others, he becomes more cooperative. He offers to tutor Bennett in mathematics, a subject in which he was weak, but Bennett suspects his motive and refuses. As a result, Bennett finds the mathematic examinations difficult, and openly worries that it will interfere with his chances of graduation. Neal, to assure Bennett's graduation, steals his examination paper and corrects the errors. He is caught returning the paper to the files, and the commandant, believing that Neal was correcting his own paper, expels him from school. Neal accepts the order without revealing the truth. Following the graduation exercises, Bennett is congratulated by one of the instructors for his high "math" marks. He states frankly that there must be some error, and requests permission to examine his paper. The re-check discloses the true story, and Bennett brings the facts to the attention of the commandant. Bennett is assured that, even if he had failed in mathematics, his general average assured his graduation. Both Bennett and Evelyn rush to the railroad station, arriving in time to bid Neal goodbye. Accepting Bennett's proffer of friendship, Neal promises to work for another appointment, so that he can return to Evelyn.

Horace McCoy and Barry Trivers wrote the screen play, Sam Bischoff produced it, and Alfred E. Green directed it. The cast includes John Hubbard, Jeff Donnell, Frank Sully, Jonathan Hale and others.

Morally suitable for all.

a low allocation picture to spurt into the higher grossing class. If a show which might ordinarily be an unimportant 'B' showed box office prowess, the distributor knew about it, and allocated it where he would get a higher share.

"Having checked this avenue, the distributor then turned to the reissue. First a system of home office approval was instituted whereby the local authority of the exchange was taken away, and a home office check put on all such bookings. Then, to make certain even more that not a nickel should be lost, 'official' reissues were instituted wherein the salesmen were instructed to take new deals all the way down the line, following key runs. The old method of 'date it in, we only have the print for a short time' was forgotten, and the 'official' reissues were handled according to the territory's release schedule.

"Furthermore, instead of spot bookings at flat prices, percentage was asked.

"One distributor even refuses reissue or repeat business because he feels it slows down his sales on the new pictures he is trying to sell at peak prices.

"Costs of practically all of these pictures had been written off years ago, but, regardless, the distributor insists on percentage or a higher flat price.

"Thus another avenue of revenue has been blocked for the exhibitor.

"The consent decree has been a bonanza for the distributors.

"Recently one prominent distributor told an exhibitor who had complained on the low gross of one of his big 'specials': 'Look at the money you made on that reissue.'

"Can anyone wonder why exhibitors are wary of distributors' promises of good faith?"

BENEFITS YOU DERIVE BY JOINING AN ORGANIZATION

Many exhibitors seem to feel as if a membership in an exhibitor organization is a liability rather than an asset.

Here are some of the benefits that a member derives:

The secretary and business manager of the organization keeps his ear on the ground for any proposed or even contemplated adverse legislation, and enlists the support of the members for fighting such legislation. There are states where there has been no anti-industry laws for many years, owing to the vigilance of the organization's executives.

The secretary, who as a rule lives in the center of distribution, undertakes to adjust differences that may arise between a member and a distributor regarding his rights under the contract, usually with good results.

The organization mails periodically an information bulletin relative to matters that are of importance to every member.

When a member, away from the exchange city, wishes to make a purchase of anything, he communicates with the secretary and obtains the information at no cost.

There are held at stated intervals meetings at which the members discuss problems that are of great importance in the operation of a theatre. The experience and wise counsel of one member help guide the other members. Pooling of experiences and offering suggestions cannot help bringing benefit. Even when a member cannot attend, he receives the benefit just the same, for the information is imparted to him by means of the service bulletin.

The secretary or business manager is usually able to lower a member's liability insurance rates.

In general, the organization's executive secretary or business manager acts as the personal representative of each member, ready to serve him at all times.

For all these benefits an exhibitor receives when a member of a regional unit, a membership in an organization is a privilege that should be valued by every exhibitor.

If you are not a member of an organization, you should become one at once. This paper believes that Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors represents the sentiment of the independent exhibitors, and for this reason it suggests that you join an exhibitor unit that is affiliated with it; but if for any reason you do not desire to join such a unit, join an exhibitor organization anyway, no matter what its affiliations, as long as you do not join one that is controlled by producers and distributors.

A NOTABLE EVENT

Allied Theatre Owners of New Jersey will celebrate its Silver Jubilee sometime in June.

The writer takes personal pride in the fact that the New Jersey organization has reached the age of twenty-five, for even though it is not known generally he is the father of this organization. When I called the first meeting of the New Jersey exhibitors in my office, four appeared. We postponed the meeting for one week with the hope that more exhibitors would attend, but the following week the same four exhibitors appeared, and we decided to proceed with the election of the officers.

Among those four exhibitors present, one was Sidney Samuelson, at that time operating the Park Theatre, at Newton, New Jersey. Mr. Samuelson was elected secretary and in the years that followed he built a strong organization through his tirelessness. It was and still is so strong, in fact, that there has been not a piece of adverse legislation enacted in the State of New Jersey in the last twenty years.

The writer hopes that he will be present at the celebration of that organization's Golden Jubilee. It is a daring wish, but why can't I wish? Strange things do happen sometimes.

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TOM CLARK REJECTS THE DISTRIBUTORS' CONSENT DECREE PROPOSALS AGAIN

In rejecting the proposals for revision of the Consent Decree, submitted to him early last November by the major distributors, U. S. Assistant Attorney General Tom C. Clark said: "We're so far apart now that unless they come across with a good deal more we might as well go ahead with the case in New York, or bring another one elsewhere." In commenting upon the distributors' statement that they went as far as they could, Clark stated: "... I can't help thinking that they're just horsing along." Clark pointed out that the distributors had made a minimum offer as a basis for trading. He made it clear, however, that there would be no trading, and that his department would lose no time in reopening the anti-trust suit unless their proposals were bettered.

That Clark meant business then and means business now can be gathered from his rejection last Monday of the distributors' latest proposals after a lengthy conference in Washington with high officials of the consenting companies.

According to the reports in the trade press, Clark found, in addition to some minor points, three principal provisions of the proposed revised decree totally unacceptable, namely, cancellation privileges, theatre acquisition, and arbitration.

Clark, because he felt that the proposals submitted to him were not yet final, was reluctant to discuss in detail his reasons for their rejection. *Film Daily*, however, reports that the Department of Justice is seeking a twenty per cent cancellation clause, to be operated on a cumulative basis. The distributors, however, are balking on these terms. Nor are Clark's demands regarding theatre acquisition acceptable to them. In the matter of arbitration, there are differences of opinion on a number of minor issues, the main difference being Clark's insistence that appeal boards be set up locally in each of the arbitration districts, while the distributors are holding out for all appeals to be handled through the arbitration board's main office in New York, as at present.

As matters stand at this writing, the distributors are to submit an amended draft by Friday, January 21. This draft, said Clark, will then be used as a basis for discussion at conferences with exhibitor organization leaders, so that each organization will be given a chance to express its views. Clark made it clear, however, that even if the distributors were to meet his terms, it would in no way mean that their proposals are acceptable, for he will still feel free to ask for fur-

ther concessions should the exhibitors prove to him the inacceptability of any particular provision.

It is apparent that Clark is determined to make the distributors toe the line. He is to be commended for taking into account the views of the independent exhibitor so that the revised decree, if any, will be an equitable one.

Thus far, Clark has done much to restore the exhibitors' faith in government agencies.

DON'T ALLOW YOUR SCREEN TO BECOME A BILLBOARD

It seems as if concealed advertising is sneaking back into pictures once again.

In Universal's "You're a Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith," there is one sequence in which a young lady, upon being offered a stick of chewing gum, asks if it is "Spearmint." The donor replies, "No, it is 'Doublemint.'" In Republic's "Whispering Footsteps," one scene shows a display of Adams Hats in a shop window.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is not in a position to know if either Universal or Republic inserted these advertisements for commercial gain. It does know, however, that the inclusion of these advertisements was improper, not only because it had no bearing on the stories, but also because it was an imposition on both the public and the exhibitor.

The person who pays his money at the box-office does so for the privilege of seeing pure entertainment. He is entitled to get what he pays for. When an advertisement is "slipped" over on him, he feels that he has become the victim of an advertising stunt, and rightfully resents it.

The exhibitor, too, is taken advantage of, for when he buys a picture solely for entertainment purposes and finds that advertising has been injected, it means that the producer has appropriated his screen without paying for the privilege. Even more important, however, is the fact that the concealed advertisement incurs the ill will of the exhibitor's patrons.

In 1931, when concealed advertising in motion pictures was rampant, HARRISON'S REPORTS carried on a vigorous campaign against the practice and was instrumental in compelling the producers to abandon it. No need exists today for carrying on such a campaign, for it is seldom that concealed advertisements show up. Nevertheless, this paper will bring every violation to the attention of its readers in an effort to prevent a recurrence of the practice.

Let us leave advertisements to the proper medium. The motion picture's medium is entertainment.

"Uncensored" with Eric Portman, Phyllis Calvert and Griffith Jones

(20th Century-Fox, Jan. 21; time, 83 min.)

Produced in Britain about two years ago, this war melodrama has an interesting story and exciting action; but its box-office possibilities in this country are questionable, for the all-British cast is unknown to American audiences. The action revolves around a group of Belgian patriots, who revive "La Libre Belgique," the famed underground newspaper of the last war, and use it to combat the propaganda of the Nazi invaders. The secret methods by which the paper is published and distributed, and the futile efforts of the Nazis to locate and suppress it, provide many tense moments. The romantic interest is mild but pleasant:—

When the Nazis occupy Belgium and set up their own newspaper, Eric Portman, a cabaret entertainer, and Griffith Jones, a priest, resurrect "La Libre Belgique." Portman enrolls Frederick Culley, a former pro-Nazi editor, to write the leading articles. Ignorant of Culley's association with the underground paper, the Nazis arrange with him to write for their paper, believing that he is still one of their supporters. Direct contact with the Nazis enables Culley to secure confidential information, and he is able to attack his own writings in ensuing issues of the patriotic paper. Portman, using his profession to cover up his underground activities, ingratiates himself with the Nazis and succeeds in thwarting their efforts to locate the hidden printing press. Peter Glenville, Portman's cabaret partner, jealous with rage because of Portman's influence with the Nazis, turns informer. As a result, the priest and the printers are seized by the Nazis, and the German commandant (Raymond Lovell) orders Culley to write a story for the Nazi newspaper announcing that "La Libre Belgique" had been suppressed and that its leaders had been captured. Portman, who had evaded capture, determines to put out another issue of the paper so that the commandant would become the laughing stock of the city. Together with Phyllis Calvert, Culley's daughter, Portman goes to a museum and prints the paper on an ancient hand press. He distributes the copies among the people, ridiculing the commandant and giving them hope for the future.

—Rodney Ackland and Terrence Rattigan wrote the screen play, Edward Black produced it, and Anthony Asquith directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Broadway Rhythm" with George Murphy, Ginny Simms and Charles Winninger

(MGM, no release date set; time, 115 min.)

This will undoubtedly prove a good box-office attraction because of the popularity of the players, the lavish production, and the Technicolor photography. But judged solely on the merits of the story, which is of the typical backstage variety, it is no more than a fair entertainment, with an appeal mostly to those who enjoy musicals that are along the order of a revue. There are a number of musical and dance routines, fashioned in the usual MGM lavish style, with Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra providing the tuneful musical backgrounds. Outstanding specialty numbers are contributed by the Ross Sisters, an acrobatic dance trio, and by Dean Murphy, whose impersonations of famous people are uncanny. There are also songs by Ginny Simms and Lena Horne, and a piano

solo by Hazel Scott. Charles Winninger, Ben Blue, Nancy Walker, and Eddie "Rochester" Anderson provide some effective comedy. The extensive running time could be cut down, for the action drags considerably in spots:—

In search of a star for his new musical comedy, George Murphy, a Broadway producer, informs Ginny Simms, a Hollywood star, that he would like her for his play, but could not use her because she wasn't the "Spanish type." On the following day Ginny, posing as a Brazilian actress, auditions for the part and wins Murphy's approval. She refuses the part, however, informing Murphy that she did not like the play. Charles Winninger, Murphy's father, an old vaudevillian, agrees with Ginny that the play is no good, and suggests to Murphy that he produce an old play of his (Murphy's), which he had neglected for years. When Murphy refuses, Winninger and Ginny decide to produce the play themselves, with Ginny in the starring role. Murphy, knowing that a failure would break his father's heart, threatens to stop the show, but Winninger overcomes the threat by proving that the play had been copyrighted in his name. Murphy then appeals to Ginny not to appear in the play, but she decides to stay with Winninger. The old vaudevillian rents a summer theatre and makes preparations for the show. During rehearsals, Ginny, upset by the rift between Murphy and his father, decides to take matters in hand. She goes to New York and informs Murphy that Winninger's show is off because the leading man had broken his ankle, and asks that she be given a part in his show. Furious because Ginny had walked out on his father, Murphy leaves for the summer theatre so that the show can be staged on schedule. Meanwhile Winninger, aware of Ginny's motive, keeps up the ruse. When Murphy opens the show with himself as leading man, he is surprised no end to find Ginny prepared to play the leading lady.

Dorothy Kingley and Harry Clark wrote the screen play, based on the musical play "Very Warm for May." Jack Cummings produced it, and Roy Del Ruth directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Sweethearts of the U. S. A." with Una Merkel, Parkyakarkus and Donald Novis

(Monogram, Feb. 7; time, 64 min.)

A poor program comedy, with music and dancing. The only possible attraction it can have for any one are the musical interludes, which are of the popular variety, but even this phase of the production is undistinguished. On the whole it is a hopeless muddle, with forced comedy situations, and an extremely ridiculous story. Parkyakarkus, of radio fame, can usually be depended upon to say something that will provoke laughs, but the dialogue assigned to him is so lacking in comedy that no matter how hard he tries it is a hopeless task. Most spectators will not know what the story is all about. Something always happens for no apparent reason, and, in general, confusion has been substituted for comedy, with poor results. Donald Novis and Lillian Cornell sing a number of songs, while the orchestras of Jan Garber, Henry King, and Phil Ohman furnish the music. The acting and direction are amateurish.

The story, such as it is, revolves around Una Merkel, a defense worker, whose ineptness and general inefficiency was a constant source of annoyance to Ralph

Sanford, manager of the plant. Knocked unconscious when she accidentally hits herself with a hammer, Una dreams that she meets Parkyakarkus, a bungling detective, who had lost his job after unwittingly helping three crooks to rob a local bank. Una joins him in his search for the crooks, and in the course of events meets Henry King and Donald Novis, a pair of draft-deferred musicians, who decide to organize a 4-F band, with Parkyakarkus as manager. Cobina Wright, Sr., wealthy owner of a huge mansion, permits the band to use her home as a night-club to entertain defense workers. In addition to their duties at the night-club, Una and Parkyakarkus continue their search for the crooks and, after a series of inane situations, capture them in Parkyakarkus' boarding house, a weird old house inhabited by a collection of assorted ghosts. These ghosts, incidentally, appear in the proceedings from time to time, but no reason is given for their presence. It may be that the producers had a gag in mind. If so, it falls flat.

Arthur St. Claire, Sherman Lowe, and Mary Sheldon wrote the screen play, Lester Cutler produced it, and Lew Collins directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Fighting Seabees" with John Wayne and Susan Hayward

(Republic, no release date set; time, 100 min.)

The first film to pay tribute to the U. S. Navy's Construction Battalions, better known as the "Seabees," this war melodrama shapes up as a virile entertainment, the sort that should undoubtedly please the action fans. Although the story is a bit incredulous at times, it is aided by smooth direction and good performances, moves along at a fast pace, and holds one's attention throughout. A romantic triangle, made up of sympathetic characters, should appeal to women. The battle sequences are exceptionally good, ranking with the best yet seen in recent war pictures. Particularly thrilling, and quite grim, is the battle that takes place towards the finish, where the Seabees, though outnumbered, wipe out the Jap attackers. The production values are very good:—

Disturbed because a few of his workmen had been killed while building a Pacific island base, John Wayne, a contractor, blames Lt. Comdr. Dennis O'Keefe. The young officer explains that the rules forbid the arming of civilians, and tries to interest Wayne in a plan to make fighting battalions out of civilian workmen. Wayne, however, refuses to cooperate. He accompanies his men to another Pacific island job, determined that they will be given a chance to defend themselves. En route, he meets and falls in love with Susan Hayward, O'Keefe's fiancée, who was a war correspondent. Arriving at the island, Wayne finds O'Keefe in charge. When the Japs attack and force a landing, Wayne, without O'Keefe's knowledge, arms his men and leads them into battle. This move interferes with O'Keefe's battle plans and, though the Japs are driven off, many of Wayne's men are killed. Susan, seriously wounded, confesses her love to Wayne, and is overheard by O'Keefe. Sobered by his mistake, Wayne returns to Washington with O'Keefe and offers to help train a battalion of civilian workmen. The battalion is named the Seabees, and Wayne is made a commander. Meanwhile Susan recovers from her wounds and seeks out Wayne. In deference to O'Keefe, now his friend, Wayne indicates that he does not love her. Wayne and O'Keefe lead the Sea-

bees to a Pacific island partially occupied by the Japs. During construction, Jap snipers take their toll of Wayne's men, but O'Keefe warns him not to leave the work. Wayne ignores the warning and orders his men into the interior to wipe out the snipers. As a result, O'Keefe's men are outnumbered when the Japs make a surprise attack. Wayne returns to his post and finds O'Keefe's men threatened with annihilation. To save them, Wayne, sacrificing his life, sets fire to an oil tank, and the flaming oil wipes out the enemy. O'Keefe and Susan are reunited, and both witness a ceremony honoring Wayne posthumously.

Borden Chase and Aeneas MacKenzie wrote the screen play, Albert J. Cohen produced it, and Edward Ludwig directed it. The cast includes Leonid Kinskey, William Frawley, Addison Richards and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Nabonga" with Buster Crabbe, Fifi D'Orsay and Barton MacLane

(PRC, Jan. 25; time, 71 min.)

A pretty dull jungle melodrama of program grade. It may get by with the action fans, because of the several fist fights, and of the murderous antics indulged in by a huge gorilla. The story is up to the intelligence of ten-year-old children; adults will consider it too ridiculous to take it seriously. The idea of a girl, about seven years of age, existing in a jungle and growing to womanhood with a gorilla as her only companion is just one example of the film's exaggerations. A good part of the footage is comprised of stock shots showing scenes of animal life:—

Flying to South Africa with his small daughter (Jackie Newfield) and a fortune in stolen jewels, Herbert Rawlinson, an embezzler, crashes in the Belgian Congo, where he dies. His daughter, finding a wounded gorilla, nurses the creature back to health and is adopted by it. Years later, Buster Crabbe, whose father, a bank president, had been unjustly accused of stealing the jewels, comes to the Congo to clear his father's name. Crabbe saves the life of a native, who, grateful, informs him of a plane that had fallen into the jungle years previously, and offers to lead him to it. He tells him also of a "white witch," who ruled the jungle aided by a giant gorilla named "Nabonga." Barton MacLane, a sinister trader, and Fifi D'Orsay, his half-caste woman associate, learn of Crabbe's plan to recover the jewels, and follow him. Meanwhile, deep in the jungle, Rawlinson's daughter (Julie London), now a young woman, lives happily under the protection of Nabonga. Crabbe and the native find the wreckage of the plane, but the gorilla, who had been trailing the two men, kills the native. Crabbe is saved from a similar fate by the arrival of Julie, who orders Nabonga away. Crabbe tells the girl of his mission, but failing to understand the complexities of civilization, Julie refuses to part with the jewels. With the arrival of MacLane and Fifi, Crabbe is forced to fight for possession of the treasure. The gorilla, recognizing MacLane and Fifi as enemies, kills them both. Nabonga dies, however, from gun shots inflicted by MacLane. Realizing that her possession of the jewels had brought her only tragedy, Julie gives them to Crabbe and agrees to accompany him back to civilization.

Fred Myton wrote the screen play, Sigmund Neufeld produced it, and Sam Newfield directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

THE ADMISSION TAX SITUATION

The latest developments in the admission tax situation indicate that the many letters and telegrams of protest, sent to Congressmen by exhibitors throughout the country, have borne fruit.

A group of non-partisan Senators including James Mead (Dem.), N. Y.; George A. Wilson (Rep.), Ia.; Harley M. Kilgore (Dem.), W. Va.; Wallace R. White, Jr. (Rep.), Me.; Sheridan Downey (Dem.), Calif.; Kenneth Wherry (Rep.), Neb.; and Chapman Revercomb (Rep.), W. Va., have taken up the fight in behalf of the industry.

On Tuesday, January 18, Senator Mead introduced an amendment providing for the elimination from the proposed tax bill of any increase in the present admission tax rate, but it was defeated in the Senate by a voice vote. In doing so, however, the Senate adopted an amendment offered by Senator Walter F. George, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, in behalf of Senator Wilson, providing for the tax to be imposed at the rate of one cent on each five cents "or major fraction thereof," instead of one cent on each five cents or "any fraction thereof." In other words, a twelve cents admission price would call for a two cents tax, while a twelve and one-half cents price would call for a three cents tax.

At this writing there are two more amendments awaiting action by the Senate. One, introduced by Senator Revercomb, provides that the one-cent-on-each-five-cents tax stand for all amusements except motion pictures, which would retain the present one-cent-on-each-ten-cents tax. In view of the defeat of Senator Mead's proposal, it is felt that Senator Revercomb's proposal will suffer a similar fate. The other proposal, introduced by Senators Wilson and Wherry, provides that the present tax rate be retained for towns with a population of 5,000 or fewer. This last proposal has a number of supporters.

The feeling persists that President Roosevelt will veto the tax bill, because the amount of revenue to be derived falls far below the amount requested by the Treasury Department. A veto of the bill would, of course, delay an increase in the present admission tax rate until a new bill is agreed upon. In such a case, the concessions won thus far by the industry would have no bearing on a new bill. Those concessions, however, as well as the industry's fight to win them, will have a strong effect on the attitude of the legislators when they consider the tax rates for the new bill.

Until the issue is settled finally, it is important that no exhibitor relax his efforts to hold the tax down. Keep your Congressmen informed of your feelings.

ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXHIBITORS

Mr. A. P. Archer, president of Civic Theatres, of Denver, Colorado, has sent a long but interesting letter concerning the plight of the independent exhibitors. Although the views expressed in this letter are not entirely in accord with the views of HARRISON'S REPORTS, it contains enough provocative ideas, which may invite discussion and arouse action, to warrant reproducing the following portion:

"The defunct 'Tumpi,' or Industry Unity Group, which failed in its effort to unite all exhibitors for the good of the motion picture business, was unable to consider our collective views on problems affecting the business. It was a notable effort by capable, sincere leaders, but it failed in applying its high ideals and

purposes to the general welfare of the independent on a national basis.

"The important issue now is a fair successor sales plan to the consent decree blocks of five trade screened groups. The proposed 'Tumpi' plan of blocks of 12, five trade screened with no cancellation, and seven unscreened with a restricted cancellation option, had serious defects. This scheme merely added seven pictures to the present plan of five. It offered no relief. The option to cancel was inadequate. It should be 20% of all pictures licensed in blocks of 5 or 12 more.

"With this cancellation privilege in the hands of a buyer as a curb on the producer-distributor to stay in line on quality deliveries commensurate with prices paid, it is firmly believed that the standard of motion pictures will be raised immeasurably, and the violent and destructive controversies between producer-distributors and independent exhibitors will be removed.

"The privileged classes of the motion picture industry, the producer-distributor and the affiliated circuits, are mainly responsible for the so-called ills of our business. There are no ills which a 20% unrestricted-unconditional cancellation privilege won't cure.

"The government has tried the consent decree plan of five which has failed to help the independent—it is willing to try other proposals. Why not the 20% idea? Let's fight for it! The producer-distributor will oppose its adoption with barrels of money and political influence. The restricted-protected and mandatory type of selling under which they are flourishing has proven to be manna from Heaven for them and misery for the independent throughout the land.

"For the past several years they have asked for what they claimed to be reasonable increases to make up for the enormous losses of the European market due to the war. The records show that what they chose to call a restricted market has actually doubled and trebled the profits of the producer-distributors and their affiliate, the circuit theatre.

"Only aroused and active enough independent exhibitors throughout the Nation are going to correct these injustices."

"HONORED HUNDRED" CONTEST TIME EXTENDED

In fairness to countless showmen who have been concentrating on bond sales since January 1, Charles P. Skouras, national chairman of the industry's Fourth War Loan drive, has made arrangements with the Treasury Department for a liberal extension of time limits governing the "Honored Hundred" contest in the Fourth War Loan. Rules and regulations of this contest were printed in last week's special bond issue.

The new ruling will assure fairness, not only for theatres that have been concentrating on general bond sales since January 1, but also for those whose bond premieres and other activities were scheduled before January 18, official opening date of the drive, and those whose activities will continue after February 15, the official closing date.

All sales made in February and January will be considered eligible in the contest. In other words, the period of credit for the "Honored Contest" will be exactly the same as campaign credit, which means that all "E" bonds sold in January and February will count in the final tally.

The contest officials feel that this gives theatremen more freedom of action and puts the contest on a basis every exhibitor wants.

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MORE ABOUT CONCEALED ADVERTISEMENTS IN FILMS

In last week's issue the disclosure was made that the practice of putting concealed advertising into pictures has again come into vogue.

Since that article appeared, this paper has had further evidence of the practice.

In Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Rationing," one sequence showing a small-town general store includes a fairly large display sign advertising the sale of "Kodak" films. In Universal's "Phantom Lady," there is a sequence in which one of the characters orders a drink at a bar and asks the bartender for "Pinch Bottle and water." The bartender lifts the familiar Haig and Haig bottle and pours the drink.

Like the concealed advertisements disclosed in last week's issue, these, too, had no bearing on the stories and added nothing to the films' entertainment values. Nor were these advertisements necessary for the sake of realism.

HARRISON'S REPORTS, in accordance with its announced policy, intends to bring to the attention of its subscribers every violation, in an effort to stamp out this predatory practice. It must be stopped before it reaches the proportions it did in 1931, when the newspapers of the country cracked down on the motion picture industry, not only because advantage had been taken of an unsuspecting public, but also because they resented the industry's intrusion into the advertising field.

Even if the producers do not receive any compensation for inserting these advertisements, the public has no way of knowing what has and what has not been paid for. The mere presence of advertising in films is a violation of public confidence. The public looks to motion pictures for entertainment, and pays an admission price to get just that. It does not want to pay for the privilege of seeing and hearing advertisements. A person who buys a newspaper knows beforehand that it contains advertisements, and he can decide for himself whether he wants to read them or not. When a person listens to the radio he has no right to object to the advertising blurbs, because the entertainment he receives is free. Besides, he can eliminate the advertising by a quick twist of the radio dial. He cannot, however, shut off a motion picture screen.

In 1931, the late Carl Laemmle, one of the industry's great men, came out strongly against concealed advertising in films. He realized that deceiving theatre patrons, or taking advantage of them, could do great harm to the industry. In an appeal to both producers and exhibitors, he said:

"Believe me, if you jam advertising down their throats and pack their eyes and ears with it, you will build up a resentment that will in time damn your business.

"Your screen is a sacred trust. It is not actually yours. It belongs to the people who pay to see what is on it. In heaven's name, don't prostitute it."

HARRISON'S REPORTS calls upon the producers to refrain from "shooting" anything that might be taken by the public as "sponsored" advertising. The practice is unethical and, unless it is checked immediately, may result in irreparable harm to the industry as a whole.

WHERE DO YOU FIT INTO THIS TAX PICTURE?

In a recent bulletin intended for all exhibitors, regardless of their organization affiliations, Mr. Abram F. Myers, General Counsel of Allied States Association, makes a comprehensive analysis of the tax fight, and offers a constructive plan whereby all exhibitor groups, affiliated or unaffiliated,

can coordinate their efforts in the handling of future tax fights. Because Mr. Myers' words apply with equal force to all branches of the industry, the bulletin is herewith reproduced in its entirety:—

"OBSERVATIONS ON THE TAX FIGHT

"A review of the recent admission tax fight will afford valuable lessons for the future.

"Although an effort to increase the tax was inevitable, the industry was unprepared for it when it came.

"UMPI was the only industry-wide attempt ever made to cope with such emergencies. But the UMPI Committee on Taxation never functioned and died along with the other branches of that ill-fated organization.

"It is a reflection on the industry that there were available no authentic current statistics as to the number of theatres in the several admission price categories or figures showing the simple, much less the weighted, average admission price of all theatres.

"When the emergency arose, the producers and distributors bowed out, taking the position that since they were not directly affected by the tax it would be inappropriate for them to oppose the increase. In view of the political handicaps under which they now suffer, that may have been a wise decision.

"Thus the burden fell upon the several exhibitor organizations, with very little time in which to co-ordinate their efforts. At the outset leaders of groups not affiliated with either Allied or M.P.T.O.A. were co-operative. Most of them authorized the General Counsel of Allied to represent them at the hearings. As a result, he spoke for a total of 23 associations with members in 28 States and the Territory of Alaska.

"At the hearing before the House Committee on Ways & Means the speakers were mercifully limited to three—Kuykendall, Myers and W. F. Crockett of the M.P.T.O. of Virginia. On this occasion, all elements were united in opposition to any increase in the existing rate of 1c on each 10c or fraction.

"AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE

"Exhibitors in some territories were slow in getting into action. But the action of the Committee in tentatively approving the Treasury's recommendation of a tax of 3c on each 10c or fraction jarred them out of their lethargy. Thereafter the work done in the territories was energetic, well directed and effective. As a result, the Committee rescinded its first action and reduced the rate to 2c on each 10c or fraction.

"The exhibitors followed closely the suggestions of their leaders. They did not waste time on hollow protests. They wrote interesting, intelligent letters to their Congressmen explaining just how the increased tax would affect their business. Those who were on friendly terms with their Congressmen made long distance calls. The exhibitors did not function as a pressure group; they merely exercised their right under the First Amendment to petition Congress.

"THE LET DOWN

"By the time the bill reached the Senate, there was a noticeable let down of enthusiasm among the rank and file and a well-meant but not altogether helpful resurgence of activity among the unaffiliated leaders.

"Rugged individualists awakened to the publicity value of an appearance before a Congressional committee. While the associations for which the General Counsel had spoken before the House Committee renewed their authorizations, it was disturbing to find that a score of exhibitors and leaders had applied to the Senate Committee on Finance for leave to be heard.

(Continued on last page)

**"Phantom Lady" with Franchot Tone,
Ella Raines and Alan Curtis**

(Universal, January 28; time, 87 min.)

An exceptionally good murder mystery melodrama. It is a tensely exciting film, filled with intrigue and suspense, and it grips one's attention from beginning to end. Joan Harrison, the producer whose initial effort this is, reveals that she learned much in the handling of this type of entertainment through her association with Alfred Hitchcock, whom she served as assistant for a number of years. As a matter of fact, it appears as if the pupil could teach the master a trick or two. The story is of the psychological sort, revolving around a paranoic who commits a murder and, to divert suspicion from himself, builds up a strong case of circumstantial evidence against his best friend, who is convicted for the crime. Although the spectator is aware of the murderer's identity, he is held in suspense throughout owing to the constant danger to the heroine, whom the murderer pretends to aid in solving the crime. The direction and performances are competent. Word-of-mouth advertising should be of considerable aid at the box-office:—

Accused of strangling his wife, Alan Curtis, an architect, claims that, at the time of the murder, he had been with a young woman (Fay Helm) he had met in a bar, and that she had accompanied him to the theatre on the condition that he would not seek to learn her identity. All he could remember about her was that she wore an odd hat. Inspector Thomas Gomez, to substantiate his story, questions Andrew Tombes, a bartender; Matt McHugh, a cab driver; Elisha Cook, Jr., a musician; and Aurora Miranda, a dancer, whom Curtis claimed had seen him with the woman. All, however, maintain that he had been alone. As a result, Curtis is convicted on circumstantial evidence and sentenced to die. Unconvinced of Curtis' guilt, Ella Raines, his secretary, who loved him secretly, determines to find the mysterious woman. She is aided in her search by Gomez, who, too, believed Curtis innocent, and by Franchot Tone, a brilliant sculptor and Curtis' friend. Unknown to Ella and Gomez, Tone, a paranoic, had murdered Curtis' wife in an insane moment, and had bribed the witnesses to refute Curtis' alibi. Ella's efforts to track down the mysterious woman are frustrated by Tone, who continues to pose as her friend. After a series of adventures, in which Cook and Tombes are murdered, Ella succeeds in locating the missing woman, only to find that she is mentally deranged. Ella humors her into giving her the odd hat, hoping that it will serve as new evidence to re-open Curtis' case. While Ella waits for Gomez in Tone's studio, Tone, in an insane fit, reveals himself as the murderer and threatens to kill her. She is saved by the timely arrival of Gomez, whose appearance causes Tone to commit suicide. Curtis is cleared and reunited with Ella.

Bernard C. Schoenfeld wrote the screen play and Robert Siodmak directed it.

Adult entertainment.

**"Passport to Adventure" with
Elsa Lanchester, Gordon Oliver
and Lenore Aubert**

(RKO, no release date set; time, 64 min.)

A moderately entertaining program comedy-drama. Lacking box-office names, it should serve its purpose as the lower half of a double bill in theatres that cater to patrons who are not too discriminating in their demands for story plausibility. The film tells a far-fetched tale about a London scrub-woman, who, in these times, manages to make her way to Berlin for the purpose of killing Hitler. Her experiences in the Chancellery give the film some humorous moments, and at times the action is mildly exciting. If one can put himself in the mood to accept the story, he might get an hour's pleasure out of it:—

While cleaning out an old trunk, Elsa Lanchester, a scrub-woman, finds a glass eye, to which her late husband, a teller of tall stories, attributed his many escapes from death. Her husband had told her that a Hindu princess gave him the "magic eye." Later after narrowly missing death in an air raid, Elsa becomes convinced that the "eye" will always protect her. Firm in this belief, she determines to go to Berlin to shoot Hitler. She stows away on a ship, which is torpedoed off the French coast, and reaches shore in a lifeboat. Pretending to be a deaf mute, she resolutely works her way to Berlin and, posing as a refugee from devastated Hamburg, manages to obtain a cleaning job in the Chancellery itself. There, while waiting for a chance at Hitler, she overhears

a quarrel between Lionel Royce, a Gestapo official, and Lord Haw-Haw (Gavin Muir), who had fallen in disfavor with the Nazis, and from them learns that Lenore Aubert, English-born fiancée of Capt. Gordon Oliver, a German ace, had been imprisoned. She helps Oliver free the girl by loaning him the "eye." In aiding Oliver, however, Elsa arouses Royce's suspicions. The Gestapo official investigates and uncovers Elsa's masquerade. He arrests her, as well as Oliver and Lenore. While Royce questions the trio, an R.A.F. squadron bombs Berlin and, in the ensuing excitement, the three escape, steal a Nazi plane, and fly to England. Elsa, though she had failed in her self-appointed mission, is acclaimed a heroine. In going through her husband's effects again, she discovers a box full of glass eyes, souvenirs of a glass blowers' convention, and realizes that her husband had been a liar.

Val Burton and Muriel Roy Bolton wrote the screen play, Herman Schlom produced it, and Ray McCarey directed it. The cast includes Fritz Feld, Lloyd Corrigan and others.

Morally suitable for all.

**"Casanova in Burlesque" with Joe E. Brown
and June Havoc**

(Republic, February 19; time, 74 min.)

Amusing program fare. It is better than most of the recent comedies in which Joe E. Brown has appeared, and should please his followers. In spite of the fact that the story is thin and somewhat illogical, it serves well enough as a means of putting the comedy and music across. Brown, cast in a dual-personality role, provokes considerable laughter by the predicaments he gets himself into while trying to keep his double life a secret. The most amusing part of the picture takes place towards the finish, where Brown and a burlesque troupe stage a "swing" version of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew." The musical interludes are tuneful:—

Cleverly concealing the fact that he leads a double life, Joe E. Brown is a dignified Shakespearean professor in the winter, and a burlesque comedian in the summer. On the eve of Brown's return to college, June Havoc, a strip-tease queen, learns of his secret and decides to use it to further her career. Brown returns to school and learns that Marjorie Gateson, middle-aged wealthy patroness of the college, had chosen him to stage a Shakespearean drama festival with herself as the star. Brown's troubles begin when June arrives shortly thereafter and demands that she be made the star lest she expose his double life. Brown agrees, making her understudy to Miss Gateson, whom he promises to get out of the way on opening night. During rehearsals, the supporting cast of Shakespearean actors leave the show because of June's "hammy" acting. June, however, demands that Brown find another cast. That night, Brown, in a drunken state, telephones the burlesque troupe to come to the school. When they arrive the next day, Brown wonders what to do with them until Dale Evans, Miss Gateson's "jitterbug" niece, suggests that they stage a swing version of Shakespeare. Brown agrees and secretly rehearses the troupe in a burlesque version of "The Taming of the Shrew." On the night of the big performance, Brown tricks Miss Gateson into staying away from the theatre, but she manages to get there in time for the final act. Her anger is dissipated, however, when her friends, wildly enthusiastic, congratulate her for having sponsored such an original idea. She gives Brown a free hand to stage the other Shakespearean plays in the same manner.

Frank Gill, Jr., wrote the screen play, Albert J. Cohen produced it, and Leslie Goodwins directed it. The cast includes Ian Keith, Lucien Littlefield, Roger Imhoff and others.

Morally suitable for all.

**"Rationing" with Wallace Beery
and Marjorie Main**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 93 min.)

A moderately entertaining comedy, of program grade. It might interest the family trade in small-town and neighborhood theatres. The action moves slowly offering its only bit of excitement in the closing scenes, where Wallace Beery, single-handedly, captures a gang of black market operators. The story revolves around a feud between Beery and Marjorie Main, who, as supervisor of a small-town ration board, makes life miserable for him. A good part of the comedy is slapstick, and for the most part it is ineffective. Beery and Miss Main do the best they can, but they are handicapped by the weak story material. A youthful romance has been worked into the plot:—

Wallace Beery, owner of a small-town general store, and Marjorie Main, post-mistress and ration board supervisor, carry on an old feud that started with their broken romance years previously. The only tie between them was the romance between Tommy Batten, Beery's adopted son, and Dorothy Morris, Marjorie's daughter. To finance their marriage, Beery sells a half interest in his store to Howard Freeman, an unscrupulous person. Peeved and befuddled by the rules of rationing, particularly as administered by Marjorie, Beery goes to Washington to see Senator Henry O'Neill, an old friend. O'Neill to appease Beery, appoints him co-supervisor of the ration board. Meanwhile, during Beery's absence, customers crowd his store demanding meat. Freeman decides to take advantage of the situation. Without Beery's knowledge, he buys a cargo of condemned meat from black market operators. Butchers from towns nearby complain to Beery that he is monopolizing the meat business, and accuse him of abusing his authority. Beery, aroused, investigates and learns of Freeman's black market dealings. Despite the feeling against him, Beery does not defend himself lest it hurt his chances of smashing the black market. He compels Freeman to reveal the racketeers' hideout, and goes there all alone to capture them. Arriving there, Beery is slugged and bound. Meanwhile a wedding ceremony had been arranged for Dorothy and Tommy, and Beery's absence arouses suspicion. The wedding guests form a posse and go to the hideout, where they find Beery, who had freed himself, battling the gangsters. They help him to round up the gang. Beery and Marjorie forget their feud and agree to try marriage.

William R. Lipman, Grant Garrett and Harry Ruskin wrote the screen play, Orville O. Dull produced it, and Willis Goldbeck directed it. The cast includes Donald Meek, Douglas Fowley, Gloria Dickson and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Voodoo Man" with Bela Lugosi, John Carradine and George Zucco

(Monogram, February 21; time, 62 min.)

Fair. As is the case with most horror melodramas, this, too, has an extremely far-fetched story, but the combination of a mad doctor, a weird voodoo priest, two half-wits, and a bevy of beautiful "undead" zombie women, makes it creepy enough to satisfy the followers of this type of entertainment. Intelligent audiences, however, will probably find the fantastic happenings more amusing than horrifying, particularly when George Zucco chants in a guttural tone while performing a weird voodoo ceremony. On the whole it is made up of familiar ingredients. A mild romance has been added to the story:—

Bella Lugosi, a retired physician, seeks to bring back to normalcy his wife (Ellen Hall), who was an "undead" zombie. Lugosi hoped to accomplish this feat by means of voodooism, but in order to succeed he requires the aid of a woman whose mental plane had to be the exact mental plane that his wife formerly had. Aided by George Zucco, a voodoo priest, and John Carradine, a half-wit, Lugosi kidnaps numerous girls and subjects them to voodooism. The experiments fail, however, and the girls become zombies. The girls' disappearances mystifies the police. Michael Ames, a reporter, becomes involved in the case when Louise Currie, a cousin of Wanda McKay, his fiancée, disappears near Lugosi's home. Both Wanda and Ames report her disappearance to the police. Meanwhile Louise, who had turned into a zombie after an unsuccessful experiment, is inadvertently let out of the house by Carradine. The police find her walking on a lonely road and take her to Wanda's home. Lugosi, learning of Louise's whereabouts, visits Wanda's home and offers to treat Louise. He explains her illness as shock and orders that she be left alone in her room. Returning to his home, Lugosi orders Zucco to bring Louise back through voodooism. Zucco succeeds. He then orders Zucco to employ voodooism to place Wanda in a trance and to bring her to the house. Wanda responds to Zucco's chants and goes to Lugosi's home. Ames, hunting for Wanda, discovers evidence indicating that Lugosi had kidnapped her. Together with the police he rushes to the house, arriving in time to kill Lugosi and to save Wanda. Lugosi's death causes his wife to die, and her death releases the kidnapped girls from their zombie state.

Robert Charles wrote the screen play, Sam Katz and Jack Dietz produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. Barney A. Sarecky was the associate producer.

Children may find it a bit too frightful.

"The Song of Bernadette" with Jennifer Jones and Charles Bickford

(20th Century-Fox, no release date set; time, 157 min.)

Excellent! Adopted from the widely read novel by Franz Werfel, this production is a profound achievement, one that Twentieth Century-Fox, as well as the entire industry, can well be proud of. It assuredly takes its place as one of Hollywood's greatest pictures. The production, direction, and acting are of the highest order. The story deals with the life of Bernadette Soubirous, the simple peasant girl of Lourdes, France, who became Sister Marie Benarde and was canonized by Pope Pius in 1933. It is interesting and stirring, not only because of its spiritual values, but also because of its deep human interest. Considering that it deals with a delicate theme—religion—it has been handled with such good taste and understanding that no one can raise objections to it.

A foreword to the picture reads: "For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe in God, no explanation is possible." It is doubtful that even a firm unbeliever will fail to be moved deeply by the honesty, sincerity, and sweetness of the simple little peasant girl, who despite the disbelief accredited to her statements and the persecutions brought against her by both public and church officials, irrevocably maintained to her dying day that she had been visited by an apparition she called "The Lady."

The story, which takes place in 1858, traces Bernadette's career from the time she was a fourteen-year-old girl to the time she died in a nunnery while still a young woman. The eldest of four children living in a poverty-stricken home, Bernadette, a frail, backward child, goes to the dump at Massabielle to collect firewood, and there, in a cave in a hill, sees a Vision—a beautiful woman, garbed in flowing white raiment, and bathed in golden radiance. Bernadette's terror turns to adoration when the Vision smiles at her. The townspeople are amazed upon hearing her story and consider it incredulous. Bernadette's family accompanies her to the grotto on the following day, and once again Bernadette sees the Vision, although the others cannot. Bernadette tells her family that the "Lady" asked her to come to the grotto each day for fifteen days. Each time she goes the Vision gives her a different message. The news of Bernadette's experiences spreads all over France, much to the dismay of the town's authorities, who feared that Lourdes would become a laughing stock. Church officials, believing Bernadette's story was an ingenious scheme to bring wealth and glory to her poor family, ignore the incident. The authorities have her examined for traces of insanity, and she is persecuted by unbelievers in many devious ways, but all fail to shake her firm belief in "The Lady." When a spring with curative water forms near the grotto, peasants and noblemen alike flock to Lourdes to partake of its healing powers. The Dean of Lourdes, impressed by this miracle and baffled by Bernadette's unshakable story, induces the Bishop of Tarbes to convene a Commission to investigate the happenings at Lourdes. After four years of exhaustive investigation, a lingering doubt still remains. When Bernadette reaches the age of twenty, the Dean of Lourdes, convinced that she is a Saint, persuades her to become a Sister at Nevers. There she contracts tuberculosis and, after a brief illness, dies protesting that she did see "The Lady."

Jennifer Jones, in her first major role, gives an unforgettable performance as Bernadette. Charles Bickford, as the doubting Dean of Lourdes, who eventually becomes her staunchest defender; Vincent Price, as the cynical prosecutor, who fails to shake her story; Charles Dingle, as the blustering police commissioner, who, too, persecutes her unsuccessfully; Ann Revere and Roman Bohnen, as her hard-working, devoted parents; Lee J. Cobb, as the sympathetic local doctor; and Gladys Cooper, as the doubting nun, who envies her, are among those in the large supporting cast who portray their characterizations with great skill.

Although the film's running time is quite long, it holds one's attention throughout.

George Seaton wrote the screen play, William Perlberg produced it, and Henry King directed it. The cast includes Patricia Morison, Sig Ruman, Blanche Yurka, Marcel Dalio, William Eythe, Jerome Cowan, Tala Birell, Edith Barrett and many others.

"The record shows that four witnesses, without previous consultation with other exhibitor representatives (at least, not with the General Counsel of Allied), volunteered compromise plans which involved an increase over the existing rate. That is to say, these men advocated formulas which, while preferable to the provision approved by the House, nevertheless involved increases over the existing rate which others were seeking to maintain.

"It has since been learned that at least one circuit operator, who did not appear at the hearing, made known to members of the Committee his preference for a tax of 1c on each 5c or fraction, which was finally adopted.

"These men had just as much right to petition their Senators and to air their views as had the spokesmen for the national associations. Nevertheless their insistence on this right had the effect to weaken those who were holding out against any increase. Compromise proposals should have been withheld until it appeared that there was no chance to maintain the existing rate; even then an effort should have been made to secure the concurrence of those acting as spokesmen.

"HANDICAPS TO EFFECTIVE ACTION

"Those who led the fight were burdened by numerous handicaps, some resulting from imperfect organization, others from the dwindling good will of the industry as a whole.

"1. The exhibitor groups that have taken an interest in legislative matters and have trained their members to respond to calls for action did an outstanding job. But there are still a few organizations that seem to be impotent in legislative crises because they have not evolved a technique for handling such matters.

"2. Generally speaking, Congressmen and Senators are interested only in the views of their constituents. While there are many exhibitors, they are scattered throughout the country and the number in any one State or Congressional district is not large. This makes it necessary for the exhibitors in each district to organize for intensive effort and to cultivate the acquaintance and friendship of their Congressmen and Senators.

"3. While the teamwork on the House side was excellent, there was no adequate co-ordination of effort after the bill reached the Senate.

"4. There was a serious lack of pertinent statistical information.

"5. Off the record conversations with individual Congressmen and Senators indicated that the prestige and good will of the industry as a whole have fallen dangerously low in some quarters. Among the contributing causes, as gleaned from such conversations, are:

"(a) Excess wartime earnings.

"(b) Immoderate salaries. (A new list was released on the day of the hearing before the House Committee.)

"(c) Maladourous exhalations from the extortion trial in New York.

"(d) Alleged political propaganda in the films favorable to the Administration. (Cited by Republicans.)

"THERE SHOULD BE NO RECRIMINATION

"Allied has urged exhibitors to pass on the increase in the tax and to inform the public the reason for the increase in the cost of theatre attendance.

"Allied did not mean to suggest public criticism of the Treasury officials or the Congress and we are disturbed by proposals in some quarters to run trailers which would reflect on Government officials. It is not smart to offend them.

"Those officials have a tremendous burden in financing the cost of the war, running into hundreds of billions, and they have treated representatives of the exhibitors with courtesy and consideration. The original proposal of a tax of 3c on each 10c or fraction was by the House Committee scaled down to 2c on each 10c or fraction. The Senate Committee further modified this to 1c on each 5c or fraction. It now appears that it may emerge from the Conference Committee as a tax of 1c on each 5c or major fraction thereof.

"It has been apparent for several days that this is the best we could hope for. We are obliged to Senators Mead and Revercomb for their efforts to eliminate any increase over the present rate. We are indebted to Senator Wilson for his several proposals and especially for the one that commended itself to Chairman George, namely, the proposal to insert the word 'major.' Exhibitors in their respective States should send a note of appreciation to their Senators and to Senator George.

"IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE

"There has been some criticism of the manner in which the fight was conducted, mostly from exhibitors who did not lift a finger to help and who are not identified—at least not prominently—with any exhibitor association.

"Offsetting this are the heartening expressions received from those who followed the struggle closely and have a real understanding of what was accomplished in the face of many burdens and obstacles.

"These thoughtful observers realize that while the Treasury two years ago recommended a tax on film rentals such as was imposed during World War I, we have thus far been spared such a tax.

"Also that while the increase in the admission tax is burdensome, it is not out of line with the tax imposed on many other lines in which increased business has not been so marked. Here are a few of the increases provided in the bill: Cabarets, roof gardens, etc. 5% to 20%; furs 10% to 20%; toilet preparations 10% to 20%; electric light bulbs 5% to 15%. The tax on distilled spirits already was in the clouds, hence the rate of increase was not so high—\$6.00 per gallon to \$9.00 per gallon; but this, nevertheless, means that on a quart of whiskey the purchaser will have to pay Uncle Sam \$2.25 for the smell before he takes the first gulp.

"THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE

"The war goes on, expenditures increase and the public debt mounts. There have been 17 tax bills in the last 11 years. The future holds the prospect of tax bills and still more tax bills.

"If the exhibitors are not to become the whipping boys of the revenue raisers they will have to strengthen as many of the above sources of weakness as lie within their power. At the very minimum, the following must be done:

"By Individual Exhibitors

"(a) Join and support the exhibitor association in your territory.

"(b) Volunteer for service on the legislative committees to be established by the associations.

"(c) Resolve to submerge your own views and, if need be, your identity in an all out effort to protect the interests of the exhibitors as a whole.

"By Regional Associations

"(d) Establish a committee of alert, intelligent exhibitors in each Congressional district to cultivate friendly relations with the Congressman of that district and acquaint him with the important public service rendered by and the needs and aspirations of the motion picture theatres.

"(e) Establish similar committees to cultivate friendly relations with the Senators of each State.

"(f) Train all members in times of crises, and on signal from their association, to write intelligent, informative letters to their Congressmen and Senators explaining just how proposed taxes will affect their business.

"(g) Affiliate with a national association, clear all national legislative action through it, and be ever ready to respond to its appeals for speedy, effective action.

"By National Associations

"(h) Keep the regional associations advised of all developments on the legislative front.

"(i) Prepare and submit necessary information, statistics and arguments to legislative committees.

"(j) Cooperate with all elements in the business, through a national conference committee or otherwise, in an effort to avoid the taking of inconsistent and conflicting positions in matters of taxation.

"LET ALL TAKE HEED

"This bulletin is addressed to all exhibitors regardless of their membership or non-membership in any association. It is not a false cry of 'wolf, wolf'; it is a solemn warning based on much observation and experience. It is devoid of industry politics.

"Each exhibitor to whose attention this bulletin may come should talk it over with the other exhibitors in his vicinity. If they are members of a regional association, they should encourage the officers of that association to put this plan into execution. If they are not members of a regional association, they should join one and work within its ranks for the adoption of the plan.

"So far as Allied is concerned, the subject will be given extended consideration at its annual board meeting which will be held in Chicago during the week beginning January 31. A plan already has been discussed with other elements in the industry looking to the co-ordination of effort as suggested in sub-paragraph (j) above, which plan will be presented to the board."

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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HERE AND THERE

WITHOUT INDICATING his appraisal of the latest draft of the proposed consent decree submitted to him recently by the five major distributors, Assistant Attorney General Tom C. Clark revealed its principle provisions to trade press representatives in Washington early this week. According to the reports, the gist of the main proposals is as follows:

The arbitration provision calls for a continuance of the present system, with the board of appeals located in New York. This is at variance with Clark's wishes that appeal boards be set up in each of the arbitration regions. The distributors have agreed, however, to arbitrate clearance with regard to their own theatres, and to arbitrate runs as they affect exhibitors in competition with their own theatres.

In the matter of cancellations, a 20% cancellation clause is offered to theatres paying an average film rental of \$100 or less; 10% to those paying \$101 to \$200; and 5% to those paying over \$200. Exhibitors with 20% cancellation privileges may cancel one of the first three pictures and, thereafter, one out of each five pictures.

In the matter of theatre acquisition, the distributors agree to secure the court's approval before adding to their holdings, except that no approval will be required for the replacement of a theatre damaged by fire or otherwise; the purchase of a "show case"; or the acquiring of a theatre in an area in which they had been "locked out" for one year or more.

The distributors have agreed to discontinue pooling arrangements in theatres or circuits owned or operated by them jointly, or in which they have a joint buying arrangement. They agree also to divest themselves of stock interests in these enterprises, leaving no more than one member of the pool to take over the entire ownership.

In the matter of franchises, the defendant distributors agree to cancel immediately existing exclusive franchises between them, and to make an effort to cancel the exclusive franchises now existing between them and the non-defendants. Failing that, they agree not to renew such franchises when they expire.

The withholding of prints to give a competitor prior playing time would be prohibited.

A distributor found guilty of forcing shorts or newsreels would be subject to a fine of \$250 for the first offense, and a fine of \$500 for subsequent offenses, the money to be paid to the exhibitor aggrieved.

The tradeshowing of features would continue as at present.

An exhibitor would have the right to cancel a film on moral, religious, or racial grounds, within five days after notice of availability.

Offhand, HARRISON'S REPORTS is inclined to feel that these "final" proposals are no more than half-measures, and that they are inadequate to afford proper relief to the independent exhibitors. It will, however, withhold comment, pending receipt of a more detailed account of the contents of these proposals.

* * *

ABRAM F. MYERS' comprehensive analysis of the recent admission tax fight, which was reproduced in last week's issue, leaves no doubt that there is a definite need for a uni-

fied exhibitor front in matters dealing with adverse tax legislation.

As Myers pointed out, there was no lack of cooperation from the individual exhibitors. The many letters and telegrams of protest they sent to their Congressmen were most effective in inducing Congress to lower the Treasury Department's recommended admissions tax of 3 cents on each 10 cents or fraction, to 1 cent on each 5 cents or major fraction. There was, however, a decided lack of cooperation on the part of several exhibitor leaders and others, who, as spokesmen for their particular groups, appeared before the Senate Finance Committee and advocated certain tax formulas, without making an effort either to coordinate with the representatives of the other groups, or merely to consult with them. In such a state of affairs, there could not possibly be a united exhibitor front. The conflicting ideas presented by the different groups tended to weaken the exhibitors' case, rather than to strengthen it.

There is a definite need for closer cooperation among exhibitor organizations, particularly when all exhibitors are faced with a common problem, such as burdensome taxation or hurtful legislation. HARRISON'S REPORTS earnestly urges upon the different exhibitor groups throughout the country that they adopt Mr. Myers' proposal for the formulation of a national conference committee, made up of representatives from each of the organizations. All matters pertaining to proposed legislation could be cleared through this committee, which would be in a position to formulate unified plans for all groups, eliminate inconsistent theories, and obviate the possibility that groups having a common interest may take conflicting positions.

One need not have psychic powers to foresee what the future holds in the way of increased taxes. To meet the constantly mounting public debt, our Government will have to resort to higher taxation, and the motion picture industry will undoubtedly have to stand its share of the burden. Having long been a favorite target of the tax legislators, our industry may find itself saddled with a greater tax load than it can bear, unless we take steps to set up machinery that will ward off discriminatory taxation. And now is the time to do it.

* * *

ONE OF THE FIRST STEPS that should be taken by a national committee representing all exhibitor associations is to pass a resolution calling on the trade papers to discontinue publishing figures of theatre receipts and of the high salaries paid to stars and directors. The publicity given to these figures leads tax legislators to believe that every one connected with the motion picture industry is a wealthy person, and that an industry composed only of wealthy people should be taxed heavily to make up the Federal government's financial needs. The same holds true for the State governments and, occasionally, the city governments.

In addition to the harm done in the matter of taxation, the publishing of weekly gross receipts is of no particular value to the independent exhibitor, because they are, for the most part, estimated receipts. Accordingly, one is not sure of their accuracy. An inaccurate report might lure an exhibitor into paying a high film rental for a mediocre film.

"Jane Eyre" with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles

(20th Century-Fox, no release date set; time, 97 min.)

No one can deny the excellence of the production values given to this somber romantic drama, and also the fact that it is an artistic achievement. As entertainment, however, it is only fair, and its appeal will be limited to class audiences. It is doubtful if the masses will find it to their taste, for it is not a cheerful entertainment. Moreover, what may have been considered a great emotional drama years ago strikes one today as being archaic. One or two situations touch one's emotions, but this is due mainly to the appealing way in which they are played. Joan Fontaine, as "Jane Eyre," gives her usual good performance, but Orson Welles, as "Edward Rochester," leaves much to be desired; he overacts the part completely, and his lines are frequently inaudible. Margaret O'Brien is appealing as "Rochester's" French ward. The best performance of the lot, however, is the one given by Peggy Ann Garner, who enacts the role of "Jane Eyre" as a child. This is the third time the story has been brought to the screen. W. W. Hodkinson produced it in 1921, and Monogram in 1934. The action takes place in England, early in the nineteenth century:—

Jane Eyre, a discontented orphan residing in the home of a wealthy aunt (Agnes Moorehead), is sent to a charitable institution that is little more than a reformatory. Grown to womanhood, she leaves the institution to become a governess to the ward of Edward Rochester, an eccentric millionaire, with whom she eventually falls in love. The huge mansion in which they lived was fraught with mystery, because of the inexplicable happenings therein. Rochester gradually becomes attracted to Jane, and proposes marriage to her. Their wedding ceremony is interrupted by a man who accuses Rochester of already being married. His secret out, Rochester reveals to Joan that the mysterious happenings at the mansion were caused by his insane wife, whom he had secretly taken care of in a hidden part of the mansion ever since she had lost her mind years previously. Jane leaves him. Months later, a premonition that something had happened to Rochester brings her back. She discovers that the insane wife had set fire to the mansion, and that she had been burned to death. Rochester, in an heroic attempt to save her, had lost his eyesight. A happy reconciliation takes place.

Aldous Huxley, Robert Stevenson, and John Houseman wrote the screen play from the novel by Charlotte Brontë. William Goetz was in charge of production, and Mr. Stevenson directed it. The cast includes John Sutton, Sara Allgood, Henry Daniell and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Bridge of San Luis Rey" with Lynn Bari, Akim Tamiroff and Francis Lederer

(United Artists, February 11; time, 107 min.)

From the standpoint of production, direction, and acting, this drama is good, but on the whole it is no more than a fair entertainment, of which the box-office appeal is doubtful. The story, which is based on Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize novel of the same title, was produced once before, in 1929, by MGM, and at that time it did not make a good entertainment because it was an incoherent aggregation of incidents, revolving around a priest who delved into the lives of five persons in an endeavor to learn why the Almighty chose them to die in a fall from an ancient bridge. The story has been altered somewhat for this version, and the different incidents in the life of each person have been tied together to form one coherent plot, but there is nothing really shown in it that would cause the spectator to take a deep interest in the fate of the characters. Moreover, talk has been substituted for action, giving the film a number of slow-moving, dull stretches. The story takes place during the period when Spain ruled Peru:—

When an ancient bridge spanning a deep gorge near Lima, Peru, breaks, hurtling five persons to their doom, Donald Woods, a priest, decides to make a searching study of the lives of the victims, and of others who were spared death at the bridge, to determine whether he can find some clue to God's intention in thus casting them into eternity at a precise moment. His search brings him to Lima, where he investigates the lives of Lynn Bari, a street dancer, who became Lima's most famous actress and a favorite of Louis Calhern, the Spanish Viceroy, only to find much unhappiness because of her aristocratic ambitions; Akim Tamiroff, a dramatic tutor, who guided the actress' career, and influenced the Viceroy in his dealings with the people; Francis Lederer, a dashing sailor, who won the actress despite the Viceroy's opposition; Lederer's twin brother (also played by Lederer), a public letter writer, who attempts suicide to show his dissatisfaction with his brother's infatuation for the actress; and Nazimova, a scheming aristocrat, who jealously resented the actress' influence with the Viceroy, and plotted against her. The priest, after weighing carefully the lives of all those involved in the collapse of the bridge, which killed both the good and the bad, admits failure in solving the riddle of God's purpose.

Howard Estabrook wrote the screen play, Benedict Bojeaus produced it, and Rowland V. Lee directed it. The cast includes Abner Biberman, Blanche Yurka and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Escape to Danger" with Ann Dvorak and Eric Portman

(RKO, no release date set; time, 84 min.)

Produced in Britain, this is a fairly good program espionage melodrama; however, it has a far-fetched story. But since the performances are good, and the story, though fanciful, is fairly engrossing, one's interest is held throughout. The action moves at a fast pace, and there is considerable excitement in several of the situations. Stock shots of the British fleet and of coastal defense batteries have been inserted to good effect. Ann Dvorak, the heroine, is the only member of the cast known to American audiences:—

When the Nazis invade Denmark, Ann Dvorak, a teacher, pretends friendship for them in order to obtain vital information for the Allies. This simulated collaboration induces the Nazis to select her as a secret agent, and they send her to England to obtain details about the movements of British invasion barges. On board a neutral vessel, she meets Ronald Adam, a German spy, and Eric Portman, a drunken Englishman, who was actually a secret British agent. As part of his plan to get into England with Ann, Adam signals a U-boat to torpedo their ship as they pass an escorted British convoy. Both Ann and Adam jump from the boat before the torpedo strikes, and Portman, too, manages to save himself. All three are rescued by a British destroyer. In the ship's sick-bay, Adam, delirious, reveals his activities to Portman. Ann, fearing that Adam would betray them both, decides to kill Portman, whom she did not trust. The Englishman, however, cleverly tricks her into killing Adam by changing beds with the Nazi. Upon his arrival in England, Portman, learning of Ann's true sympathies, puts her through an acid test to establish her loyalty. He then reveals his identity and arranges with her to continue working with the Nazis, in order to lure the German navy into a trap. Working with Ivor Barnard, a German agent, Ann installs an automatic transmitter in a barge, so that the radio beam would betray its position to the enemy. The installation complete, Portman intervenes. Barnard, recognizing the hoax, kills Ann before he is arrested. Laying its plans carefully, the British Admiralty sends the barge out to sea as a decoy. German naval and air forces follow the beam, only to be led into a trap where British forces meet and destroy them.

Patrick Kirwan wrote the story, Victor Hanbury produced it and Lance Comfort and Mutz Greenbaum directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Weekend Pass" with Martha O'Driscoll and Noah Beery, Jr.

(Universal, February 18; time, 63 min.)

Routine program fare. It is no better and no worse than the majority of Universal's "assembly-line" comedies with music, which are more to the taste of adolescents than of adults. Like most of the other pictures, this, too, has a mere thread of a story, which serves mainly as an excuse for some one to burst into song. Most of the comedy situations are inane, depending on slapstick for laughs. Ballroom dancing by Mayris Chaney; harmonica music by Leo Diamond and his Harmonaires; and singing by The Sportsmen, the Delta Rhythm Boys, and Martha O'Driscoll, make up the musical portion of the film:—

Granted a weekend vacation, his first in eighteen months, Noah Beery, Jr., decides to go to a quiet hotel for a rest. En route, he unwillingly makes the acquaintance of Martha O'Driscoll, who leads him on a merry chase when she inadvertently drives off with his coat. After a day full of hectic experiences, in which he tries to protect her from a drunken admirer, Beery reaches his hotel in the early hours of the morning, just as a newsboy delivers papers announcing that Martha had been reported missing by her grandfather (George Barbier), head of a naval academy. Martha persuades Beery to trail the newsboy and destroy every paper in town. Later, he learns that she ran away from home because she wanted to join the WACS, while her grandfather wanted her to join the WAVES. Beery, sympathizing with her, helps her to hide. A search is instituted for Martha, and Beery soon finds that he is being sought as her "kidnapper." Tired and angry, Beery locks Martha into a dog-catcher's truck, and drives her to the naval academy. There, after a series of misunderstandings, Martha vindicates Beery and promises her grandfather that she will join the WAVES. Tired but happy, Beery returns to the shipyard.

Clyde Bruckman wrote the screen play, Warren Wilson produced it, and Jean Yarbrough directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"In Our Time" with Ida Lupino and Paul Henreid

(Warner Bros., February 19; time, 110 min.)

An interesting topical drama, with an appealing romance. The action takes place in Poland, prior to and including the Nazi invasion, and, in terms of a romance between an English girl and a young Polish Count, it depicts forcefully the class distinction that existed in that country at that time, and portends that it was one of the main reasons for Poland's quick capitulation to the Nazis. Many of the situations are filled with deep human interest. Miss Lupino gives an excellent performance. Throughout the spectator feels intense sympathy for her, because of her efforts to help her husband become self-sufficient, despite the opposition of his aristocratic family. The others in the cast perform well. There are no actual war scenes:—

Shortly before the war's outbreak in 1939, Ida Lupino, an English girl, accompanies her employer (Mary Boland), an antique dealer, on a buying expedition to Warsaw, where she meets and falls in love with Paul Henreid, a nobleman. They marry, despite the opposition of his family. In Poland, Ida finds many vestiges of the middle-ages—baronial estates; titled aristocrats; and peasants who were near-serfs. Alla Nazimova, Henreid's mother, lived in memories of the past; Nancy Coleman, his sister, was disdainfully aloof; Victor Francen, his wealthy uncle, controlled the family purse-strings, and was a political leader and advocate of appeasement with the Nazis. Only Michael Chekhov, another uncle, had progressive ideas, but he was ineffectual because the family ignored him. Despite his family's insistence that he maintain rigid formality and detachment from the peasants, Henreid, inspired by Ida, teaches the peasants modern farming methods and gives them a share of the estate's profits. His efforts are successful, enabling him to manage without Fran-

cen's financial aid. When the Nazis attack Poland, Henreid joins his regiment, while Ida helps the peasants to gather the harvest. Henreid, wounded, soon returns, and reports that the Polish armies are in collapse. Francen, and Henreid's mother and sister, flee to Monte Carlo, but Ida, Henreid, and Chekhov refuse to go. Rallying the peasants, Ida and Henreid help them to set fire to the estate and to the crops. They join thousands of other Poles in falling back, sad but confident that the democratic ideals for which they fight will survive.

Ellis St. Joseph and Howard Koch wrote the screen play, Jerry Wald produced it, and Vincent Sherman directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

BOX-OFFICE PERFORMANCES

(Continued from back page)

Universal

"Follow the Band": Fair.
 "Cowboy in Manhattan": Fair.
 "We've Never Been Licked": Fair.
 "Captive Wild Woman": Fair.
 "All by Myself": Fair-Poor.
 "Mr. Big": Good.
 "Two Tickets to London": Fair.
 "Get Going": Fair-Poor.
 "Hit the Ice": Very Good.
 "Gals, Inc.": Fair.
 "Hers to Hold": Very Good.
 "Honeymoon Lodge": Fair.
 "Phantom of the Opera": Good.
 "Fired Wife": Fair.
 "The Strange Death of Adolph Hitler": Poor.
 "Larceny with Music": Fair-Poor.
 "Top Man": Good.
 "Sherlock Holmes Faces Death": Fair.
 "Always a Bridesmaid": Fair.
 "Corvette K-225": Good-Fair.
 "Crazy House": Good-Fair.
 "Hi' Ya' Sailor": Fair.
 "You're a Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith": Fair-Poor.
 "Flesh and Fantasy": Good-Fair.
 "Son of Dracula": Fair.
 "The Mad Ghoul": Fair.
 "His Butler's Sister": Very Good.
 "So's Your Uncle": Fair.
 "She's for Me": Fair.
 "Calling Dr. Death": Fair.
 "Moonlight in Vermont": Fair.

Thirty-two pictures, excluding five westerns, have been checked with the following results:

Very Good, 3; Good, 3; Good-Fair, 3; Fair, 18; Fair-Poor, 4; Poor, 1.

Warner Brothers

"Mission to Moscow": Fair.
 "Action in the North Atlantic": Very Good-Good.
 "Background to Danger": Good-Fair.
 "The Constant Nymph": Good-Fair.
 "This Is the Army": Excellent.
 "Watch on the Rhine": Very Good.
 "Thank Your Lucky Stars": Very Good-Good.
 "Murder on the Waterfront": Fair-Poor.
 "Adventure in Iraq": Poor.
 "Princess O'Rourke": Very Good-Good.
 "Find the Blackmailer": Fair-Poor.
 "Northern Pursuit": Good.
 "Old Acquaintance": Very Good-Good.

Thirteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Excellent, 1; Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 4; Good, 1; Good-Fair, 2; Fair, 1; Fair-Poor, 2; Poor, 1.

BOX-OFFICE PERFORMANCES

(The previous box-office performances were printed in the June 19, 1943, issue.)

Columbia

"Redhead from Manhattan": Fair-Poor.
 "The More the Merrier": Excellent-Very Good.
 "The Boy from Stalingrad": Poor.
 "It's a Great Life": Good-Fair.
 "Two Senoritas from Chicago": Fair.
 "Crime Doctor": Good-Fair.
 "Good Luck, Mr. Yates": Fair-Poor.
 "What's Buzzin' Cousin": Fair.
 "Appointment in Berlin": Fair.
 "Passport to Suez": Fair.
 "First Comes Courage": Fair.
 "My Kingdom for a Cook": Fair.
 "Destroyer": Good.
 "Dangerous Blondes": Good-Fair.
 "Footlight Glamour": Good-Fair.
 "Doughboys in Ireland": Fair-Poor.
 "Sahara": Very Good.
 "The Chance of a Lifetime": Fair.
 "Return of the Vampire": Poor.
 "There's Something About a Soldier": Fair.
 "The Heat's On": Fair-Poor.
 "Crime Doctor's Strangest Case": Fair.
 "Klondike Kate": Fair.
 "What a Woman!": Very Good-Good.

Twenty-four pictures, excluding three westerns, have been checked with the following results:

Excellent-Very Good, 1; Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 1; Good, 1; Good-Fair, 4; Fair, 10; Fair-Poor, 4; Poor, 2.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

"Bataan": Very Good-Good.
 "Harrigan's Kid": Fair.
 "Presenting Lily Mars": Good.
 "The Youngest Profession": Good-Fair.
 "Pilot No. 5": Good-Fair.
 "Dubarry Was a Lady": Fair.
 "Hitler's Madman": Poor.
 "Random Harvest": Excellent-Very Good.
 "The Human Comedy": Very Good.
 "Salute to the Marines": Very Good-Good.
 "Above Suspicion": Good-Fair.
 "I Dood It": Fair.
 "Swing Shift Maisie": Good-Fair.
 "Best Foot Forward": Good.
 "Adventures of Tartu": Fair-Poor.
 "Dr. Gillespie's Criminal Case": Fair.
 "Young Ideas": Fair.
 "Girl Crazy": Good.
 "Lassie Come Home": Good.
 "The Man from Down Under": Fair-Poor.
 "Whistling in Brooklyn": Fair.
 "Thousands Cheer": Excellent-Very Good.
 "Cross of Lorraine": Good-Fair.

Twenty-three pictures have been checked with the following results:

Excellent-Very Good, 2; Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 2; Good, 4; Good-Fair, 5; Fair, 6; Fair-Poor, 2; Poor, 1.

Paramount

"High Explosive": Fair-Poor.
 "China": Very Good-Good.
 "Aerial Gunner": Good-Fair.
 "Five Graves to Cairo": Good.
 "Salute for Three": Fair-Poor.
 "Dixie": Very Good-Good.
 "Henry Aldrich Swings It": Good-Fair.
 "Alaska": Fair-Poor.
 "So Proudly We Hail": Very Good.
 "Submarine Alert": Fair.

"Let's Face It": Very Good-Good.
 "The Good Fellows": Fair-Poor.
 "True to Life": Fair.
 "Tornado": Fair-Poor.
 "Hostages": Fair.
 "The City That Stopped Hitler": Poor.

Sixteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 3; Good, 1; Good-Fair, 2; Fair, 3; Fair-Poor, 5; Poor, 1.

RKO

"Squadron Leader X": Poor.
 "Mr. Lucky": Very Good.
 "Gildersleeve's Bad Boy": Fair-Poor.
 "The Leopard Man": Fair-Poor.
 "Petticoat Larceny": Fair.
 "The Sky's the Limit": Good.
 "The Falcon in Danger": Fair.
 "Behind the Rising Sun": Good.
 "Mexican Spitfire's Blessed Event": Fair-Poor.
 "Bombardier": Good.
 "Coastal Command": Poor.
 "The Fallen Sparrow": Good.
 "Adventures of a Rookie": Fair.
 "The Seventh Victim": Poor.
 "So This Is Washington": Fair-Poor.
 "A Lady Takes a Chance": Good.
 "The Iron Major": Good.
 "Gangway for Tomorrow": Fair.
 "Government Girl": Good.
 "Gildersleeve on Broadway": Fair-Poor.
 "The Falcon and the Co-Eds": Fair.
 "The North Star": Very Good-Good.

Twenty-two pictures, excluding two westerns, have been checked with the following results:

Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 1; Good, 7; Fair, 5; Fair-Poor, 5; Poor, 3.

Twentieth Century-Fox

"Ox-Bow Incident": Fair.
 "Jitterbugs": Good-Fair.
 "Coney Island": Excellent-Very Good.
 "Stormy Weather": Fair.
 "Heaven Can Wait": Very Good.
 "Bomber's Moon": Good-Fair.
 "Holy Matrimony": Good-Fair.
 "Claudia": Very Good-Good.
 "Wintertime": Good.
 "Sweet Rosie O'Grady": Excellent-Very Good.
 "Paris After Dark": Good-Fair.
 "Guadalcanal Diary": Excellent-Very Good.
 "Battle of Russia": Poor.
 "The Dancing Masters": Fair-Poor.
 "Happy Land": Fair.
 "The Gang's All Here": Very Good.

Sixteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Excellent-Very Good 3; Very Good, 2; Very Good-Good, 1; Good, 1; Good-Fair, 4; Fair, 3; Fair-Poor, 1; Poor, 1.

United Artists

"Prairie Chickens": Poor.
 "Stage Door Canteen": Excellent-Very Good.
 "Somewhere in France": Fair-Poor.
 "Nazty Nuisance": Fair-Poor.
 "Victory Thru Air Power": Fair-Poor.
 "Yanks Ahoy": Fair-Poor.
 "Hi Diddle Diddle": Fair.
 "Johnny Come Lately": Good.
 "The Kansan": Fair.
 "The Woman of the Town": Fair.

Ten pictures, excluding four westerns, have been checked with the following results:

Excellent-Very Good, 1; Good, 1; Fair, 3; Fair-Poor, 5.

(Continued on inside page)

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P. S. HARRISON, Editor

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1944

No. 7

HERE AND THERE

THIS PAPER'S RECENT editorials about concealed advertising in pictures brought forth the following comment in an official bulletin, dated February 3, of the New York State Publishers Association:

" 'Don't Allow Your Screen to Become a Billboard.' "

"This is the headline used by the *Harrison's Reports* on movies in its January 22 issue to protest the fact that 'concealed advertising is sneaking back into pictures again.' "

"The usual method, as described by this motion picture reviewing service, is for an actor to prominently display a particular brand of liquor or to call for a brand of chewing gum by name, and so forth.

"It is to be remembered that in 1933 the New York State Publishers Association co-operated with *Harrison's Reports* in protesting against indecency and commercial advertising in pictures. It is also worthy of note that Mr. George B. Williams, Geneva Daily Times, who called our attention to the recent outbreak of this concealed advertising, played a prominent part in getting the situation corrected in 1933."

To the New York State Publishers Association, HARRISON'S REPORTS says, "Thanks for remembering."

* * *

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT of concealed advertising, here is another violation, which has been brought to this paper's attention by a Cincinnati exhibitor:

In 20th Century-Fox's "Guadalcanal Diary," one sequence deals with the approach of the zero hour for a battle attack. As the commanding officer looks at his wrist watch, the camera shifts to a full close-up of the timepiece as it ticks away the final seconds. Shown plainly on the watch is the nameplate "Gruen."

Unlike other violations cited by this paper, the close-up of a watch in this sequence had a definite place in the development of the story, for it added to the suspense. Care should have been taken, however, to show a watch that did not display legibly the nameplate of the manufacturer.

Whether or not the advertisement given to "Gruen" watches was paid for is immaterial. The practice is objectionable. The producers should exercise greater care in such matters, for they should know that the public assumes an antagonistic attitude towards advertisements in pictures, and the one way it shows its displeasure is by staying away from the theatres.

Let us keep the advertisements out and bring the patrons in.

A MOST IMPORTANT and encouraging development in exhibitor relations was the joint conference of independent exhibitors held in Chicago two weeks ago under the auspices of National Allied.

This group, as most of you already know, met for the specific purpose of studying the consenting distributors' proposals for changes in the consent decree, a draft of which was sent to them by Assistant Attorney General Tom C. Clark.

In attendance at the conference were Allied's executive board, and representatives of the Pacific Coast Conference of Independent Theatre Owners; North Central Allied; Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Virginia; Unaffiliated Independent Exhibitors of New York; Allied Independent Theatre Owners of Iowa-Nebraska; Independent Exhibitors, Inc., of New England; and Allied Theatre Owners of the Northwest.

Naming itself the National Council of Unaffiliated Exhibitors, the group, after a thorough analytical study of the distributors' proposals, appointed a committee to set forth its views in a brief that was to be submitted last Wednesday (February 9) at a meeting in Washington with Mr. Clark.

In keeping with a promise made to Mr. Clark, no public announcement was made of the decisions reached at the conference. But enough has been printed in the trade papers to indicate that those at the conference felt that the distributors' recommendations were far from satisfactory.

The committee appointed to meet with Clark included Abram F. Myers and Col. H. A. Cole, of Allied; William Crockett of the MPTO of Virginia; Robert Poole, of the PCCITO; and Jesse Stern, of the UIE of New York.

A unified independent exhibitor front, such as the National Council of Unaffiliated Exhibitors, should go far in inducing Mr. Clark either to obtain greater concessions from the distributors, or to proceed against them with the anti-trust suit.

* * *

IT SEEMS AS IF the hue and cry raised by this paper, *Film Bulletin*, and numerous independent exhibitor organizations, against Columbia's failure to keep its promises to its 1942-43 contract-holders, and its utter disregard for the rights of its customers, have reached the shores of Australia.

The *Australasian Exhibitor*, a leading trade journal in that country, has taken up the cry, devoting the front page of its November 25, 1943 issue to a resume of the facts that led up to Columbia's being branded as the "company of worthless promises."

(Continued on last page)

"The Return of the Vampire" with Bela Lugosi and Frieda Inescort

(Columbia, Nov. 11; time, 69 min.)

Strictly for the horror fans. It belongs to the cycle of horror pictures fashioned after the "Dracula" stories, and although it is eerie enough it is an unpleasant entertainment; it does not hold one's interest because it is wholly unconvincing, and could appeal only to morbid natures. This time, to add to the gruesomeness, Bela Lugosi, in his familiar role as the vampire, is aided and abetted by a "wolf man," his slave. The situations that show the different characters either hammering a spike into a dead man's body, or pulling it out, are sickening to watch. It is also unpleasant to watch Matt Willis' face become distorted as it changes into that of a "wolf man." Though horrifying, the film is made up of familiar ingredients. The action takes place in England:—

Lugosi, aided by Willis, attacks the six-year-old daughter of Professor Gilbert Emery, who lived in a sanatorium operated by Frieda Inescort, a scientist. Recognizing that his daughter had been attacked by a vampire, Emery, assisted by Miss Inescort, tracks Lugosi to his crypt and, together, they drive a spike through his heart. With the death of his master, Willis regains his normal human features, and Miss Inescort takes him to her home and rehabilitates him. Twenty years later, a Nazi bomb strikes Lugosi's grave, and his body is thrown above the ground. Workmen, seeing the spike through his heart, remove it, causing Lugosi to return to life. Vowing vengeance, Lugosi brings Willis under his spell and attacks Emery's daughter (Nina Foch) once again. Miss Inescort, aware that Lugosi had returned, visits Miles Mander, head of Scotland Yard, for help. Mander considers her story fantastic, but agrees to aid her. After a series of incidents in which Lugosi evades the police, he succeeds in luring Nina to his secret crypt. Willis, whom Lugosi had abandoned in favor of Nina, his new slave, finds a crucifix on the floor of the crypt and, holding Lugosi in its shadow, causes him to disintegrate completely. Willis dies with his master, and Nina becomes her normal self.

Griffin Jay wrote the screen play, Sam White produced it, and Lew Landers directed it.

Too horrifying for children.

"Lady in the Dark" with Ginger Rogers, Ray Milland and Jon Hall

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 100 min.)

A very good entertainment, and an outstanding box-office attraction. The extremely lavish production values, enhanced by Technicolor photography, are breathtaking in their beauty. The exquisite gowns worn by Ginger Rogers and the female supporting cast will make women gasp. As a matter of fact, the glamorous clothes is one of the film's chief attractions. Based on the highly successful Broadway stage play of the same title, the story, which alternates between realism and fantasy, revolves around a businesslike but neurotic young woman editor of a fashion magazine, whose emotional confusion is depicted in a series of three fantastic but spectacular dream sequences, which are tuneful, imaginative, and rich in humor. Though the story deals with the anguish of a human being, it is not a depressing entertainment; the dialogue is quite witty, and it has a number of very good comedy situations. Since psychoanalysis is the theme, it is doubtful if children will understand the story. Ginger Rogers, as the repressed heroine, is excellent. Cast in a role that runs the gamut of emotions, she makes the most of every opportunity to display her versatility, whether it be singing, dancing, or playing a highly dramatic scene. The supporting cast is excellent throughout:—

Ginger finds herself on the verge of a nervous breakdown for reasons she cannot fathom. She believes herself in love with Warner Baxter, her publisher, but shrinks from the idea of marrying him when he obtains a divorce from his wife. Ray Milland, the magazine's crack advertising manager, irritated her; he constantly poked fun at her for being a career woman who scorned glamour. In desperation, Ginger visits a psychiatrist (Barry Sullivan) who, through his in-

terpretation of her weird dreams, learns what caused her neuroses. He finds that, as a child, Ginger had been frustrated by her parents, and that, as an adolescent, she had lost out on her first romance to a better looking girl. She then built a wall around herself by determining to become a career woman, so as not to compete against other women as a woman. Sullivan informs her that her illness was due to her failure to satisfy her subconscious female desires. He suggests that she change her mode of living, and that she find a man capable of dominating her. Realizing that Baxter was the sort of man who needed mothering, Ginger rejects his love. She meets Jon Hall, a handsome film star, and accepts his marriage proposal after a whirlwind courtship. But Ginger breaks the engagement when she learns that he is an insecure person, one who could not manage his own affairs. When Milland resigns as advertising manager, and admits to her frankly that he resented her being his boss, and that he coveted her job, Ginger asks him to remain, agreeing to share her authority with him. Enthusiastic, Milland takes immediate charge of the magazine's affairs. Ginger comes to the realization that she was in love with Milland and, as he takes her into his arms, she changes into a completely happy personality, free from repressions and fears.

Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett wrote the screen play based upon the play by Moss Hart, Dick Blumenthal produced it, and Mitchell Leisen directed it. Buddy G. De Silva was the executive producer. The cast includes Mischa Auer, Mary Philips, Phyllis Brooks, Edward Fielding, Gail Russell and many others. Morally suitable for all.

"The Imposter" with Jean Gabin

(Universal, Feb. 11; time, 94½ min.)

A moderately entertaining war melodrama, of program grade. The story, which is rather weighty, is more or less a character study of an escaped French convict, whose regeneration is brought about when he joins the Free French forces. The effective acting of Jean Gabin holds one's interest, but there are times when the picture drags and becomes tiresome. There is no comedy relief, or romantic interest, and a tragic note is sustained throughout. One feels sympathy for Gabin because of his desire to compensate for his past. Ellen Drew, the only woman in the cast, appears in a few brief sequences:—

Jean Gabin, about to be guillotined for killing a policeman, escapes from a Paris prison during a Nazi air raid. Heading for the south of France, he hails a ride on a military truck transporting soldiers. The truck is strafed and bombed by a Nazi plane. Gabin, seeing his chance to assume a new identity, changes clothes with a dead soldier and steals his papers. He makes his way to a seaport, where he boards a freighter together with a group of French soldiers including Richard Whorf, John Qualen, Allyn Joslyn, Peter Van Eyck, and Eddie Quillan. The ship sails to a free French port in Equatorial Africa, where the six men join DeGaulle's army. Gabin and his new-found friends are commissioned to build an airfield in the jungle. Through the months of hard and dangerous work, Gabin becomes the natural leader of the men and wins their devotion. He is promoted to Lieutenant, and distinguishes himself in a desert battle. Returning to his camp, Gabin is decorated for bravery, only to learn that the medals he received were for a previous act of bravery on the part of the dead soldier, whose identity he had assumed. Gabin confesses the truth to one of his buddies, who advises him to remain silent. Later, Gabin is recognized as an imposter by Ellen Drew, the dead soldier's fiancée, who had come to the camp in search of her sweetheart, and by Milburn Stone, who had served in battle with the dead man. Gabin confesses to the authorities and, at a court martial, is demoted to the rank of private. Sent to the desert front, Gabin, completely ignoring his own safety for that of his comrades, dies a hero as he wipes out a machine gun nest.

Julien Duvivier wrote the screen play, produced it, and directed it. The cast includes Ralph Morgan and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Sullivans" with Thomas Mitchell, Anne Baxter and Selena Royle

(20th Century-Fox, no release date set; time, 111 min.)

Excellent entertainment for the masses. Twentieth Century-Fox has taken the life story of the Sullivans—the five brothers who lost their lives in the sinking of the cruiser Juneau—and made of it a delightful combination of comedy and drama, with deep human appeal. Although the story is simple, it is so true to life, that audiences will chuckle with delight at some of the situations. Other situations are so touching, that they bring tears to the eyes.

The first part of the film deals with the life of the boys as mere youngsters, and shows how they were raised together in a typical American home by God-fearing parents, who, though poor, gave them the simple comforts of a good home. Depicted are their boyish quarrels, which were quickly patched up so that no animosity would exist among them; their joy at the acquisition of their first dog; the near-tragedy that befalls them when they go sailing in a leaky rowboat; and ever so many other boyish pranks that drive parents to distraction. One of the most comical situations is the one in which the father catches the boys smoking cornsilk and, instead of whipping them, gives each of them a cigar and tells them to smoke like men. Their subsequent sickness cures them of the habit.

The second part of the picture shows the boys grown to manhood, and concerns itself with the romance and marriage of the youngest brother. Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, they join the Navy and secure permission to serve on the same ship. Months later, all lose their lives when their ship is sunk.

Sam Jaffe, the producer, has very wisely limited the scenes dealing with the war and the brothers' final moments to about half of the final reel. Primarily, "The Sullivans" is a story of a typical American family, told with charming simplicity.

Thomas Mitchell and Selena Royle enact the roles of the parents with deep understanding. Anne Baxter is appealing as the wife of the youngest brother, and Trudy Marshall is charming as the boys' only sister. Edward Ryan, John Campbell, James Cardwell, John Alvin, and George Offerman, Jr.—all unknowns—give fine performances as the five Sullivan boys. As their junior counter-parts, Bobby Driscoll, Marvin Davis, Buddy Swan, Billy Cummings, and Johnny Calkins are excellent.

Mary C. McCall, Jr., wrote the screen play, and Lloyd Bacon directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Men on Her Mind" with Mary Beth Hughes, Edward Norris and Ted North

(PRC, Feb. 12; time, 69 min.)

A mildly entertaining program picture, with music, suitable for small-town and neighborhood theatre patronage. The story, which deals with the trials and tribulations of a talented young singer, and with her problem in selecting one of three suitors, presents nothing novel. But it has enough human interest, romance, and tuneful music, to keep one pleasantly entertained for an hour. Mary Beth Hughes, the heroine, acts well and sings effectively. The flashback method is used in the telling of the story:—

Returning to her dressing room after a triumphant radio debut, Mary Beth Hughes is congratulated by Alan Edwards, a successful business man; Edward Norris, a wealthy playboy; and Ted North, a youthful music professor. Each admits his love and asks her to marry him. Grateful to all three for having helped her to become a success, Mary, pondering which one to accept, retraces the events in her life from the time she left an orphanage to seek a singing career. Her first job had been in a laundry, but she had given up that vocation when a burly truck driver sought to

marry her. Eventually she secured a position as secretary to Edwards, who became interested in her voice and sponsored her singing career. But Kay Linaker, Edwards' sister, fearing that Mary had designs on her brother, had compelled her to break the association. Mary next met Norris and, through his influence, became a singer in a local cafe. Having fallen in love with Norris, Mary had accepted a diamond bracelet from him. But she had unjustly connected the bracelet with a reported jewel theft and, lest she become involved, had fled to a small town. There, through a case of mistaken identity, she became a physical instructress in a girls' school, where she met and fell in love with North. Months later, she had been traced to the school by Edwards, who had induced her to resume her musical education. Having attained her ambition in life with her debut, Mary, weighing the advantages she would gain through marriage to one of the three men, decides that she will be happiest with North.

Raymond L. Schrock wrote the screen play, Alfred Stern produced it, and Wallace W. Fox directed it. The cast includes Luis Alberni and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Up in Arms" with Danny Kaye, Dinah Shore and Dana Andrews

(RKO, no release date set; time, 106 min.)

Very Good! Elaborately produced, and photographed in Technicolor, this is the sort of comedy that keeps one laughing from beginning to end; it should satisfy all types of audiences. The story itself is thin, but this does not detract from the picture's entertaining quality, for it is filled with gags and situations that are extremely comical. The film marks the screen debut of Danny Kaye, a versatile, dynamic comedian, who should become a great favorite with the motion picture public. As a matter of fact, without him, the production would not amount to much. His delivery of three song specialties, especially written for him, is alone worth the price of admission to see and hear. His portrayal of a high-strung hypochondriac is extremely funny. Dinah Shore, in addition to taking a leading part in the amusing action, sings a few numbers pleasantly. Constance Dowling and Dana Andrews handle the romantic interest. A lavish musical dream sequence, with the "Goldwyn Girls," is a high spot of the production:—

Despite his claim of numerous imaginary ailments, Danny Kaye is classified 1-A and inducted into the army, together with Dana Andrews, his pal. Constance Dowling and Dinah Shore, the boys' girl-friends, join the WACS. Kaye, who was in love with Constance, was unaware that she was in love with Andrews. Nor did he realize that Dinah was in love with him. Having completed their training, the boys are sent to an embarkation point, where they prepare to board a transport bound for the South Pacific. Constance and Dinah, who, too, were ready for shipment overseas, come to the dock to bid the boys goodbye. Through a series of strange circumstances, due to Kaye's bungling, the girls find themselves on board ship as it leaves the harbor. While Dinah is able to satisfactorily explain her presence, Constance, however, was technically a stowaway. Kaye's efforts to keep her from being discovered keep the ship in a constant state of pandemonium. Eventually, her presence becomes known to the captain, and Kaye, gallantly taking the blame, is thrown into the brig for the rest of the voyage. When the ship arrives at a Pacific Island, Kaye is confined in a guard house, only to be captured by the Japs during a raid. In a series of wild heroics, he manages to outwit his captors, and returns to his camp leading twenty captured Jap soldiers, strung on a rope like fish on a string. He is acclaimed a hero.

Don Hartman, Allen Boretz, and Robert Pirosh wrote the screen play, Samuel Goldwyn produced it, and Elliott Nugent directed it. The cast includes Louis Calhern, Elisha Cook, Jr., Lyle Talbot, Walter Catlett, Sig Arno and others.

Morally suitable for all.

Quoting liberally from articles that have appeared in HARRISON'S REPORTS condemning Columbia for its unethical practices, the *Australasian Exhibitor* makes the following comments:

"And so that is how the parent of the company with which we Australians deal is viewed by some folks over in America. And the significance of the affair for us is that these are the views of authorities to whom Australian exhibitors are prone to look for guidance and information.

"Nick Pery's (*Ed. Note: Columbia's managing director in Australia*) home office has certainly got itself in bad with the American exhibitors!

"How is he faring here? In view of the mess overseas, can he fulfill his promises expressed or implied?"

Pointing out that Mr. Pery announced forty-eight features for the 1942-43 season, and that the list included "16 top line productions," the *Australasian Exhibitor* then lists the titles of the eight top productions Columbia has failed to deliver, and queries: "Are they to be announced by the same Mr. Pery . . . for next year, too? Then what is he going to announce for the year after? The same—or some of the same again—pictures? We only want to know what is fact and what is fancy."

Elsewhere in its article, this Australian trade paper states: "Somehow or other despite their pretensions to bigness the Columbia product always seemed in our opinion to slip. They came to us like nicely labeled jam pots, but when we opened the tins we found very little inside. They were like boys, full of boastful confidence, trying to do a man's work. The truth is that Columbia, despite the kick forward Capra gave it, . . . never rose above being what it has always been, a handy exchange for programme fillers."

Referring to Columbia's exploitation of its pictures, the article says: "Every one goes out to the public as if it were a treasured masterpiece—and then, like the spoilt boy it is, shows a tendency to play up at the box office."

It certainly appears as if Columbia's reputation is no local matter. Perhaps we shall hear from some more countries before long.

* * *

AT ITS CLOSING session of the meetings held in Chicago on February 3 and 4, the board of directors of Allied States Association elected the following officers:

Martin G. Smith, of Ohio, as president, succeeding M. A. Rosenberg, who served two terms; William L. Ainsworth, of Wisconsin, as treasurer, succeeding Mr. Smith who served in that capacity for several terms; Roy Harrold, as secretary, succeeding Meyer Leventhal, of Maryland; Pete J. Wood, of Ohio, re-elected as recording secretary; and Abram F. Myers, of Washington, re-elected as general counsel and chairman of the board.

Martin Smith, long a capable leader in exhibitor circles, is a fine fellow. He should bring new vigor to the organization in the great work to be accomplished during the coming months.

HARRISON'S REPORTS felicitates the newly elected

and re-elected officers, and wishes for them a tenure marked with successful achievements.

* * *

A COMMITTEE COMPOSED of Pete Wood, as chairman, Henry Lowenstein, and Maxwell Alderman, was appointed by Allied's board of directors to make a study of the plan to form a national council of independent exhibitors for the purpose of presenting a united front against discriminatory tax legislation. The committee will poll the individual Allied units to learn if they favor participation in such a plan.

"The Ghost That Walks Alone" with Arthur Lake and Lynne Roberts

(Columbia, Feb. 10; time, 63 min.)

Poor program fare. It is a murder mystery comedy, weighted down by an inane story, and undistinguished in either direction or acting. Here and there some of the situations manage to provoke a mild grin, but on the whole it is extremely boring. Arthur Lake, who enacts the role of a scatter-brained young man, similar to the characterization he portrays in the "Blondie" pictures, struggles hard to be amusing, but his efforts are unavailing. The production rates no better than the lower half of a mid-week double bill:—

Arthur Lake, sound effects man on a failing radio show, marries Lynne Roberts, the show's ingenue. Warned by the sponsor that the program will be cancelled unless it showed a definite improvement in its next broadcast, the others in the cast plead with the newlyweds to postpone their honeymoon. The young couple ignores their pleas and go to a mountain resort operated by Barbara Brown, Lake's sister. There they find Matt Willis, an eccentric employee, and Ida Moore, an equally eccentric middle-aged guest. Both resent openly the presence of the young couple. Late that night, the peace of the resort is shattered by the arrival of the newlyweds' fellow players, who had followed them to rehearse for the crucial broadcast. The group included Jack Lee, producer of the show, and Janis Carter, his wife; Arthur Space, a character actor, who carried on openly with Janis; Warren Ashe, the leading man, whom nobody liked; and Frank Sully, a script writer. Excitement occurs when Lee is found murdered in bed soon after all retire. Deciding that the police might interfere with their important rehearsals, the members of the cast determine to solve the murder themselves. They stuff the corpse into Lake's sound effects box and hide it in the basement of the lodge. Lake's activities keep him away from his bride all night, and she refuses to speak to him on the following morning. The mystery deepens when Lake's sound effects box containing Lee's body disappears. It is found in a Los Angeles railroad depot by two detectives, who come out to the resort and arrest Lake for the murder. After a series of nonsensical happenings, in which all search for Miss Moore, who had disappeared after indicating that she knew the murderer's identity, the killer is revealed as Ashe.

Clarence Upson Young wrote the screen play, Jack Fier produced it, and Lew Landers directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1944

No. 8

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE TRULY INDEPENDENT EXHIBITORS

The committee, appointed by the independent exhibitors' conference held in Chicago on January 31 and February 1 to consider the consenting distributors' proposals for an amended and supplemental decree, has submitted to Assistant U. S. Attorney General Tom C. Clark a report, dated February 8, in which it gives an account of the action taken by the conference with respect to each of the distributors' proposals, and outlines its objections, counter-proposals, and recommendations, and the reasons therefor.

The committee, in its report, emphasizes the fact that "every objection, counter-proposal, or recommendation set forth in this report is the result of the unanimous vote of all participants in the conference," which was attended by the authorized representatives of 22 national and regional independent exhibitor associations, having members in 29 states and comprising a "large majority of the organized independent exhibitors of the United States." These representatives, states the report, "with one vote denounced the distributors' proposals as grossly inadequate and as further evidencing the unyielding and defiant attitude of the defendants."

Pointing out that, under the present decree, the monopolistic practices of the defendants have increased in number and severity, and that there is little hope for relief under an amended and supplemental decree, the committee reports that the unanimous view of the conference was that the "only course compatible with the statutory duty of the Attorney General and the dignity of the United States is either to proceed with the pending suit or to file a similar proceeding in another judicial district and to prosecute it vigorously."

Should the Department of Justice conclude, however, that there is still a possibility that the defendants will consent to a decree that will afford substantially the relief sought by the Government in its original petition, the committee sets forth the following suggestions and recommendations, agreed upon by the conference, relative to such a decree:

I. SELLING PROVISIONS

(Ed. Note: The numbers given to the paragraphs in this article are the same as those given in the committee's report.)

(1) *Trade Showings.* Since the Department of Justice insists that feature pictures be trade shown before they are licensed for exhibition, the conference is willing to accede to their wishes, but, in order to prevent certain abuses that have grown out of the practice of trade showing pictures, namely, the unfair competitive advantage gained by the distributors and their affiliated theatres over independent subsequent-run exhibitors by exhibiting pictures before they have been tradeshowed, and by releasing to affiliated and other favored theatres features contained in a group that had been only partially tradeshowed, the conference recommends that the trade showing provision be fortified and protected by the following:

(a) That the definition of a trade showing, as set out in the distributors' proposals, be amended, so that it will read:

"A trade showing is an exhibition of a feature at a theatre or in a projection room for the benefit of exhibitors' generally, to which the public or a paying audience is not admitted."

(b) That the substance of the following suggestion be included in the decree:

"That no picture included in an announced group of pictures shall be licensed for public exhibition in any theatre until all the features in that group have been trade shown."

(2) *Quarterly Groups.* With reference to the present system of selling, the independent exhibitors blame the five picture plan for the enormous increase in film rentals dur-

ing the last three years, and a majority favor a reversion to the system of offering a full season's output of features in a single group. Although they recognize that the trade showing of features would, as a practical matter, make full-season selling impossible, the exhibitors are convinced that the distributors can, if required, offer their features in substantially larger groups than at present. Clark's attention is directed to the backlogs the distributors have on hand, and to the fact that MGM, one of the defendants, since the fall of 1942, has been offering its trade shown features, except specials, in quarterly groups, approximating 12 pictures each. Accordingly, the adoption of the following provision is urged:

"Features shall be offered to exhibitors in groups representing in each case not less than 25% of the company's bona fide estimate of its annual output, and not more than four groups a year."

(3) *Forcing Features.* Pointing out that the forcing of features was continued in violation of Sec. IV (a) of the decree, and that violations have increased by leaps and bounds since that provision lapsed on June 1, 1942, the reinstatement in the decree of the following provision is urged:

"The license or offer for license of a feature or group of features shall not be conditioned upon the licensing of another feature or group of features."

"In order to prevent willful disregard of such provisions," states the report, "such as occurred while Sec. IV (a) of the original decree was in effect, the conference recommends that it be made enforceable in the manner outlined in Sec. III (1) of this report." (Ed. Note: Sec. III (1) refers to penalties, which are outlined later on in this article.)

(4) *Forcing exhibitor to license for two or more theatres.* Requiring an exhibitor who operates two or more theatres to license features for both or all his theatres as a condition to licensing for the theatre for which he desires the product, is referred to in the report as "compulsory block-booking in the highest degree." To cure this growing evil, the inclusion of the following provision is recommended:

"That the licensing of feature pictures for exhibition in one theatre shall not be conditioned upon the licensing of features for exhibition in another theatre or theatres."

(5) *Forcing Shorts.* The inclusion in the decree of the following provision in the distributors' proposals is approved:

"No distributor shall offer for license one or more features conditioned upon the licensing (1) of short subjects, news-reels, trailers or serials (hereinafter collectively referred to as shorts), or (2) of re-issues, westerns or foreigns (hereinafter collectively referred to as foreigns)."

For the purpose of this provision and of all other provisions relating to foreigns and westerns, it is recommended that such pictures be defined in the decree as follows, and that the provisions should be made enforceable as recommended in Sec. III (2) of the report, which refers to penalties:

"Westerns are those western pictures which are not of the usual character and type of, and are inexpensively produced as compared with, the distributors' general line of features."

"Foreigns are feature pictures produced outside of the North American continent or which have predominantly foreign casts unfamiliar to American audiences."

The remaining portions of Sec. I of the report are herewith reproduced in full:

"(6) *Westerns, foreigns, and re-issues.* In order to prevent the forcing of inferior product and further in order to protect the cancellation provision hereinafter recommended, the conference recommends that, by a limitation on the pro-

(Continued on last page)

"Lady, Let's Dance" with Belita and James Ellison

(Monogram, April 11; time, 88 min.)

Good! Given production values that are far more expensive than those found in the average Monogram product, this picture should more than satisfy those who enjoy a combination of music, dancing, and ice skating, with a sprinkling of comedy. It is mostly all "Belita." In addition to her expert skating routines, Belita shows unusual ability as a dancer, displaying her versatility in ballroom, ballet, and acrobatic dancing. Her acting, too, has improved. Not much can be said for the story, which is unimaginative and serves merely as a framework for the lavish production numbers. Frick and Frack, a comedy skating team, are quite good. Some comedy is provided by Walter Catlett, who imagines himself to be a rugged westerner. The orchestras of Henry Busse, Mitch Ayres, Eddie LeBaron, and Lou Bring, furnish the music:—

When Maurice St. Clair's dance partner leaves him and disrupts the floor at a swank hotel, James Ellison, a promoter, promises the hotel manager (Lucien Littlefield) that he will find another star. Walter Catlett, a part owner of the hotel, discovers that Belita, a waitress, had been a well known dancer and skater in Europe, and presses her into service. Ellison falls in love with Belita and, perceiving her great talent, decides to further her career. He pretends that Henry Busse, an orchestra leader, wanted her for his new show, and sends her to Chicago. Joining Busse's show, Belita learns that Busse did not send for her, and that Ellison financed her trip. She tries to contact Ellison, but to no avail. In succeeding months, however, she becomes a great star. Meanwhile Ellison, who had been discharged by Littlefield for having sent Belita away, finds it difficult to obtain another position, and shortly thereafter is drafted into the army. Months later, Catlett, responding to Belita's appeals, finds Ellison, wounded, in a veterans' hospital. Through Catlett's efforts, Belita and Ellison are re-united.

Peter Milne and Paul Gerard Smith wrote the screen play, Scott R. Dunlap produced it, and Frank Woodruff directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Curse of the Cat People" with Simone Simon and Kent Smith

(RKO, no release date set; time, 70 min.)

This psychological horror drama is mediocre program fare. Supposedly a sequel to "Cat People," it fails to carry the punch of that picture. As a matter of fact, the film alternates between being a horror drama and a fairy tale. The story is so fantastic and improbable that some of the situations seem ridiculous. It does have some eerie moments and at times the spectator is held in suspense, but on the whole it falls far short of gripping one's attention:—

When Ann Carter, his daughter, imagines many strange fancies, Kent Smith fears that she may grow up like Simone Simon, his first wife, who had met a tragic end as a result of her strange and supernatural beliefs. Jane Randolph, Kent's second wife and Ann's mother, believes it is merely a childish quirk. Ann goes to a dilapidated house nearby her home, where she meets Julia Dean, a half-crazed elderly actress, who believed that Elizabeth Russell, her daughter, was an impostor. Miss Dean takes a liking to Ann and gives her a "wishing-ring." Lonely because other children would not play with her, Ann rubs the ring and wishes for a friend. Simone, in spirit, comes before Ann, and for months the child plays happily with her, but does not tell Kent lest he do not believe her. When Ann finds a photograph of Simone and reveals to her father that she is her "friend," Smith punishes the child for "lying" to him, despite her insistence that she can see Simone. Ann, frightened and anxious to find her "friend," runs away from home during a blinding snow storm, and seeks refuge in Miss Dean's home. Realizing that her liking for the child had aroused her daughter's enmity, Miss Dean tries to hide Ann, but she suffers a heart attack because of the excitement, and dies. Miss Russell, in a murderous rage over her mother's death, decides to kill Ann. But Simone's spirit intervenes in time to save the youngster. Grateful for having found the child unharmed, Kent determines to mend his ways and make Ann's life a happier one.

DeWitt Bodeen wrote the screen play, Val Lewton produced it, and Gunther V. Fritsch and Robert Wise directed it.

Since it is not gruesome, it is suitable for children.

"Chip Off the Old Block" with Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan

(Universal, February 25; time, 79 min.)

Like the previous comedies with music in which Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan have been featured, this, too, is a fast-moving, gay program entertainment; it should easily satisfy their followers. As is usually the case, O'Connor, aided and abetted by Peggy, provokes considerable laughter by his continuous clowning and snappy dialogue. Their song and dance routines are highly entertaining. The film introduces Ann Blyth, a sixteen-year-old youngster, who has a pleasing personality and a very fine singing voice. Joel Kupperman, the "Quiz Kid" of radio fame, appears in two amusing sequences. The story, though thin, has many mirthful situations. Helen Broderick and Arthur Treacher add to the comedy:—

Given a two weeks suspension from a naval academy for having burlesqued the faculty during the annual school show, Donald O'Connor returns home to visit Lt. Commander Patric Knowles, his father. On the train, he meets Ann Blyth, whose mother (Helen Vinson) was a famous actress. The youngsters are attracted to each other and make a date for that evening. O'Connor is met at the station by Peggy Ryan, an exuberant friend, whose display of affection causes Ann to indignantly cancel their date. O'Connor's attempts at a reconciliation become complicated when he learns that, years previously, his father had jilted Ann's mother, and that Helen Broderick, Ann's grandmother, had a similar experience with his grandfather. To add to his worries, O'Connor overhears a conversation between his father and a foreigner about secret plans, and mistakenly believes that Knowles had become involved in a spy plot. Actually, Knowles was arranging secretly to build a boat as a birthday present to his son. O'Connor manages to clear up his misunderstanding with Ann, and both Peggy and he attend Ann's coming-out party. There, Ernest Truex and J. Edward Bromberg, Broadway producers, hear Ann sing and beg her to play the lead in a new musical show. Ann declines, but changes her mind when O'Connor advises her to accept, providing the producers give the profits to war-time charities. O'Connor persuades the producers to give Peggy a part. On opening night, Donald substitutes for a missing member of the cast, and the show is a huge success. After learning the truth about the "spy plot," O'Connor returns to the academy to resume his naval career.

Eugene Conrad and Leo Townsend wrote the screen play, Bernard W. Burton produced it, and Charles Lamont directed it. The cast includes Arthur Treacher, Minna Gombell, Samuel S. Hinds and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Action in Arabia" with George Sanders and Virginia Bruce

(RKO, no release date set; time, 76 min.)

A fairly good program melodrama. It belongs in the category of spy stories, and, although it fails to strike a realistic note, those who enjoy this type of entertainment should find it interesting. The action, which takes place against the colorful background of Damascus and the desert nearby, moves along at a nice pace, with most of the excitement occurring towards the finish, where the Nazi spies are killed and an Arab revolt suppressed. There are some good aerial shots showing large assemblages of Arabs and camels in the desert. A romance between George Sanders and Virginia Bruce is worked into the story, but it is incidental:—

George Sanders and Robert Anderson, American newspapermen on their way back to the States, arrive in Damascus. Sensing a story in the meeting between Andre Charlot, a mysterious fellow-passenger, and Lenore Aubert, daughter of a powerful Arab leader, Anderson follows the two, while Sanders registers at a hotel operated by Alan Napier, a Nazi agent. There, Sanders becomes interested in Virginia Bruce, a mysterious French woman. When Anderson is found dead in a native quarter, Sanders decides to remain until he solves his friend's death. He finds evidence of a Nazi plot to stir up revolt among the Arab tribes and, aided by Robert Armstrong, of the American Legation, trails Virginia, Napier, and Gene Lockhart, a Frenchman of dubious character, to an abandoned airport, where they overhear that

Napier planned to attend a conference at the villa of Lenore's father (H. B. Warner). The Americans steal Napier's plane and fly to the villa. Virginia, stealing Napier's car, drives toward the same destination, with Napier in pursuit. Arriving at the villa, Sanders finds that Charlot had hoodwinked Warner into allowing Jamel Hasson, a traitorous Arab chief, to gain control of the Arab tribes, which were to be used against the Allies. Virginia arrives on the scene and reveals that she is Free French, but that Lockhart, her father, had compelled her to collaborate with the Nazis. Although Sanders convinces Warner of the plot against his people, all are made prisoners by Charlot and his henchmen. In a daring escape, in which Armstrong sacrifices his life, Sanders and the others reach the meeting place of the tribesmen. There, Warner quells the revolt and incites the tribesmen to kill the Nazis. His work accomplished, Sanders leaves for home, accompanied by Virginia, his bride.

Philip MacDonald and Herbert Biberman wrote the screen play, Maurice Geraghty produced it, and Leonide Moguy directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Passage to Marseille" with Humphrey Bogart, Claude Rains and Sydney Greenstreet

(Warner Bros., March 11; time, 110 min.)

A thrilling melodrama, with a war background. It will undoubtedly prove a good box-office attraction because of the popularity of the stars, who will be remembered as the principals in "Casablanca." The story, which deals with a group of French convicts who escape from Devil's Island to fight for France, pulls no punches in making out its case against fascism and the French appeasers, and it is told in a series of flashbacks, at times, flashbacks within flashbacks. The film has many exciting moments, a high spot being a battle aboard ship between Free Frenchmen and fascist sympathizers. It has its brutal moments, too. The maltreatment of convicts in the penal colony, and the deliberate, though justified, shooting down of defenseless Nazi fliers clinging to the wreckage of their submerged plane, are not pleasant sights to watch. For the most part the action moves along at a steady pace, occasionally bogging down because of excessive dialogue. Except for a few brief sequences, in which Michele Morgan appears as Bogart's wife, there are no women in the cast. The performances are excellent:—

At a camouflaged airport in England, Captain Claude Rains relates to John Loder, a newspaperman, the story of a Fighting French bomber squadron based there. Rains' story begins at the start of the war, when he had been ordered back to France from New Caledonia on a freighter bound for Marseille. During the voyage, the ship had rescued five unconscious men, who had escaped from Devils Island. Victor Francen, the ship's captain, had treated them kindly, much to the annoyance of Major Sydney Greenstreet, a professional soldier, who hated the Republic and admired fascism. The five men had taken Rains into their confidence and had convinced him of their patriotism. Each had told him of the circumstances that resulted in his conviction, and how Vladimir Sokoloff, a released convict confined to the island, had helped them to escape to fight for France. The five men included Humphrey Bogart, a French journalist, whose opposition to the appeasers at the time of Munich resulted in his conviction on a trumped up charge of murder; Philip Dorn, a deserter from the French Army; Peter Lorre, a pickpocket from Paris; Helmut Dantine, murderer of his sweetheart; and George Tobias, a simple-minded farmer, who had murdered an official when a new dam flooded his land. News of France's surrender had provoked a crisis aboard ship. Seeking to avoid capture in Marseille, Francen had set the ship's course for England, but Greenstreet and other fascists took over control of the ship. With the aid of the five convicts, however, the mutineers had been overpowered and Francen restored to control. As Rains concludes his story by telling what the five convicts are doing at the airport, a bomber returns from a mission, and Bogart is taken out dead. On his person is found a letter to his young son in occupied France, reminding him that France will live forever.

Casey Robinson and Jack Moffit wrote the screen play, Hal B. Wallis produced it, and Michael Curtiz directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE TRULY INDEPENDENT EXHIBITORS

(Continued from back page)

have no right to assert any such claim unless he shall have mailed to the distributor at its Home Office a notice in writing of such claim and of the grounds therefore not later than five days after the alleged offer is claimed to have been made. The power of the arbitrator in deciding any such controversy shall be limited to making (1) a finding as to whether or not the offer to license such feature or features was so made or conditioned, and, if the finding be in the affirmative (2) an award imposing upon the distributor making such offer a penalty in the amount \$500.00, payable to the complainant.

"(2) *Forcing Shorts.* For the enforcement of the provision against forcing shorts the conference approved the provision contained in Sec. IV, C, 1 and 2, modified to conform, in general, to the foregoing provision relating to the forcing of features; that is to say—

"The time in which notice must be given, in cases where a license has been entered into, should be extended to five instead of two days after receipt by the exhibitor of the distributor's written approval of his application. The provision for an award, in such cases, should be in the conjunctive; i.e., it should provide for both cancellation and penalty. The amount of the penalty should be fixed at \$250,000, and at \$500.00 in case of a repetition of the offense, without leaving it to the discretion of the arbitrator to impose a less amount. All penalties should be made payable to the complainant.

"(3) *Enforcement of cancellation provision.* The provision for arbitrating complaints involving the refusal of a distributor to grant the cancellation right to be provided in the decree, either in offering features for license or in permitting cancellation after a license has been entered into (distributors' proposals, IV A), should be amended by increasing the time for giving notice from two days to five days after receipt by the exhibitor of written approval of his application, or after the refusal to cancel, as the case may be.

"(4) *Other penalties.* In addition to the foregoing, the conference recommends wherever in the decree an arbitrator is authorized to include a penalty in his award, such penalty be made payable to the complainant instead of into the arbitration fund."

IV. CIRCUIT EXPANSION

Stating that the very foundation of the anti-trust suit is the charge that the defendant distributors, by granting preferences to each others' affiliated theatres, and by discriminating against the independent exhibitors, have acquired a monopoly of exhibition, the report points out that the declared purpose of the suit is to divorce the distributors from their theatre holdings. Yet the distributors' proposals make no provision whatever towards carrying out that purpose. They do not provide for maintaining the status quo of their theatre holdings, nor do they provide against further acquisitions, which may have the effect to restrain trade.

The only provision in the distributors' proposals that would, with minor modifications, afford some protection against the growth of the monopoly, provides that no defendant shall build or acquire a financial or proprietary interest in a theatre except on application to a U. S. District Court, after showing that such acquisition will not unreasonably restrain interstate trade or commerce in motion pictures in the particular competitive area. But this provision, states the report, "is wholly emasculated and made of no effect" by a second provision that would, in effect, authorize unlimited expansion in "locations" and "general localities" where the distributors or their controlled corporation already have theatres.

Strongly recommending that this second provision be eliminated in its entirety, the report further recommends that the first provision be amended to provide that any exhibitor who might be affected by the proposed acquisition of a theatre shall be notified of the application, and shall have the right to appear in court and be heard as to the effect on his business of the proposed expansion.

Recommended also is that application for expansion be filed before the court in the district in which the theatre in question is located, rather than in New York, so that the objecting exhibitor would not be required to travel to New York in order to protect his interests.

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vision for selling in quarterly groups, westerns, foreigns, and re-issues, as above defined, be excluded from such groups.

"(7) *Specials and roadshows.* The conference took note of the established practice of excepting from blocks or groups certain features called specials and roadshows. Taking account of changed economic conditions, and in order to prevent abuses, it is recommended that specials and roadshows be excepted from the quarterly groups only when they conform to the following definitions:

"Roadshow is an exhibition within the film delivery territory in which the feature is to be given a roadshow status, at a theatre which during the engagement shall not give more than two performances a day and where a majority of the main floor seats are reserved and sold at an admission price of not less than one dollar and a half."

"A special is a feature produced by a person or company other than the distributor releasing it and which the distributor is required by contract with the producer to license on a separate agreement."

"(8) *Features offered singly.* Features of the class that are offered singly generally are given such extended runs before they are made available on general release that they are milked dry. It is unfair to require an exhibitor to accept as part of a group a picture the boxoffice possibilities of which have already been exhausted. Therefore, the conference recommends the following provision:

"No feature which was not originally included in a regular quarterly group, shall thereafter be offered for license otherwise than singly."

"(9) *Announced groups.* The conference recommends the insertion in the decree of the following in order to prevent the inequities resulting from the practice of distributors in shifting pictures from one announced group to another, solely in their own interest:

"An announced group of features shall be the same throughout the United States and a group once announced shall not thereafter be changed; provided, that nothing herein shall prevent variations resulting from the roadshowing of a picture in one territory and not in another, or shall prevent the licensing of such lesser number of features as the distributor and the exhibitor may agree upon."

"(10) *Blind Pricing.* Not only did the five picture plan open the way for the distributors to demand additional percentage engagements, but numerous practices have been resorted to in order to mulct the exhibitors of the last possible penny of revenue on such engagements. One of the most vicious of these devices is blind pricing; i.e., withholding allocation of a picture to its price category until after its boxoffice possibilities have been demonstrated—sometimes after the picture has completed its engagement in the theatre in question—and then allocating it in the sole discretion and interest of the distributor. Since playing on percentage is by its very nature a gamble, the risk should be borne by both parties, and the distributor should not, in effect, be allowed to lay its bet after the race has been run."

"For the foregoing reasons, and because this and other selling practices dealt with in this report are manifestations of the monopolistic power of the defendants, the conference felt that the practice should be outlawed by the decree. To that end the conference recommends adoption of the following:

"The price and/or terms of each feature in a group shall be designated at the time the application for such group is signed by the exhibitor and shall not thereafter be changed except by agreement of the parties to the license agreement."

II. CANCELLATIONS

(Ed. Note: This section of the report is herewith reproduced in full.)

"The conference felt strongly that the cancellation right outlined in the distributors' proposals was too narrow and easy to evade. The conference recalled that during the negotiations for a code of fair trade practices in 1939, when the several distributors were not in nearly as strong a financial position as they are today, they voluntarily offered a much more liberal cancellation than that contained in the present proposals. The formula then put forward (copy of which was submitted to the Department of Justice) was, in substance:

"Where the exhibitor pays an average film rental which does not exceed \$100 per picture, 20%."

"Where the average rental is in excess of \$100 and not in excess of \$250 per picture, 15%."

"Where the average rental exceeds \$250 per picture, 10%."

"Thus the 1939 formula which was advanced by the non-consenting as well as the consenting defendants was more

generous both in graduation of the film rentals and the percentage of cancellations allowed."

"The conference felt that the amount of film rental paid had no bearing upon the right to cancel feature pictures, at least so far as independent theatres are concerned. Due to the enormous increase in film rentals in recent years, many exhibitors who could have qualified for a 20% cancellation a few years ago now could qualify for only a 10% or even 5% cancellation."

"For these reasons and others that might be cited the conference urges the incorporation in the decree of a 20% unrestricted cancellation for all exhibitors regardless of the amount of film rental paid."

III. ENFORCEMENT

(Ed. Note: This section, too, is reproduced in full.)

"(1) *Weakness of enforcement provisions.* The distributors' proposals like the original decree provide for enforcement by the exhibitors by means of arbitration proceedings instead of direct enforcement by the Department of Justice. This places the burden of enforcement on the weakest and most dependent elements in the industry. The reluctance of the exhibitors to incur the ill will of the distributors on which they are dependent for product, plus the inadequate and inconclusive nature of the awards provided in the decree, resulted in little or no enforcement of the original decree."

"There can be no doubt, in view of the survey made by Allied States Association and the Pacific Coast Conference, that the remedial provisions of the original decree, particularly those against the forcing of features and shorts, were flagrantly disregarded."

"Unless these offenses are made subject to injunctions written into the decree, and the Department undertakes to police and enforce the decree, violation and evasion will surely result."

"The very least that can be done to insure a proper observance of the decree, if the Department is not to assume direct responsibility, is to include in the awards penalties payable to the complaining exhibitor in such amounts as to cover all costs of the proceeding and make the effort worthwhile."

"(1) *Forcing Features.* For the enforcement of the provision against forcing features (supra I (3)), the conference recommends the following:

"Where a license has been entered into, controversies arising upon a complaint by an exhibitor that the licensing to him of one or more features was conditioned upon his licensing another feature or features, and controversies arising upon complaint by an exhibitor that the licensing to him of one or more features for exhibition in one theatre was conditioned by the distributor upon his licensing a feature or features for exhibition in another theatre, shall be subject to arbitration. An exhibitor shall have no right to assert any such claim unless he shall have mailed to the distributor at its Home Office a notice in writing of such claim and the grounds thereof, not later than five days after receipt by the exhibitor of the distributor's written approval of the exhibitor's signed application or applications for such features. Pending the determination of the arbitration proceeding, the distributor shall not require the dating or playing of the forced pictures, and other pictures licensed by the distributor to the exhibitor shall be delivered to the exhibitor on his regular availability. The power of the arbitrator in deciding any such controversy shall be limited to making (1) a finding as to whether or not the licensing of such feature or features was so conditioned; and, if the finding be in the affirmative, (2) an award which shall cancel the license for the forced features and shall impose upon the distributor defendant a maximum penalty equal to the total film rental stipulated in the license for the forced pictures,* but which in any case shall not be less than \$500.00, such penalty to be payable to the complainant."

"Where no license has been entered into, controversies arising upon a complaint by an exhibitor that the offer to him of one or more features was conditioned by the distributor upon his licensing another feature or features, and controversies arising upon a complaint by an exhibitor that the offer to him of one or more features for exhibition in one theatre was conditioned by the distributor upon his licensing a feature or features for exhibition in another theatre, shall be subject to arbitration. An exhibitor shall

*In case any of the pictures are to be played on a percentage basis, the film rental shall be computed as provided in the license agreement in case of the failure of the distributor to deliver a print, i.e., a miss-out.

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Suspected Person—PRC (76 min.)	3
Sweethearts of the U. S. A.—Monogram (64 min.)	14
Tender Comrade—RKO (103 min.)	2
There's Something About a Soldier—Columbia (81 min.)	11
Timber Queen—Paramount (66 min.)	7
Uncensored—20th Century-Fox (83 min.)	14
Uninvited, The—Paramount (98 min.)	8
Up in Arms—RKO (106 min.)	27
Vigilantes Ride, The—Columbia (56 min.)	not reviewed
Voodoo Man, The—Monogram (62 min.)	19
Weekend Pass—Universal (63 min.)	23
You're A Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith—Universal (64 min.)	10

RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR FEATURES

Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

5029 Klondike Kate—Neal-Savage	Dec. 16
5203 Cowboy in the Clouds—Starrett (55 m.)	Dec. 23
5005 What a Woman!—Russell-Aherne	Dec. 28
5036 The Racket Man—Neal-Bates	Jan. 18
5020 Swing Out the Blues—Haymes-Merrick	Jan. 20
5022 Beautiful But Broke—Davis-Frazee	Jan. 28
5006 None Shall Escape—Hunt-Knox	Feb. 3
5204 The Vigilantes Ride—Hayden (56 m.)	Feb. 3
5220 Cowboy Canteen—Starrett-Frazee (72 m.)	Feb. 8
The Ghost That Walks Alone—Lake-Carter	Feb. 10
Nine Girls—Harding-Keyes	Feb. 17
Sailor's Holiday—Lake-Lawrence	Feb. 24
Hey, Rookie—Miller-Parks	Mar. 9
Two-Man Submarine—Savage-Neal	Mar. 16
Sundown Valley—Starrett (55 m.)	Mar. 23
The Whistler—Dix-Stuart	Mar. 30
Cover Girl—Hayworth-Kelly	Apr. 6

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

(Block 2—release dates are tentative)

413 Thousands Cheer—Grayson-Kelly	January
414 Cross of Lorraine—Aumont	January
415 Lost Angel—O'Brien-Craig	January
417 Cry "Havoc"—Sullivan-Sothorn	February
422 Song of Russia—Taylor-Peters	February
490 Madame Curie—Garson-Pidgeon	February
416 A Guy Named Joe—Tracy-Dunne	March
418 Rationing—Beery-Main	March
419 Broadway Rhythm—Murphy-Simms	March
420 See Here, Private Hargrove—Walker-Reed	March
421 Heavenly Body—Powell-Lamarr	April
423 Swing Fever—Kay Kyser	April

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- 303 Women in Bondage—Patrick-Kelly.....Jan. 10
 302 Where Are Your Children—Storm-Cooper...Jan. 17
 362 Westward Bound—Trail Blazers (54 m.)...Jan. 17
 888 The Sultan's Daughter—Corio-Butterworth...Jan. 24
 352 Raiders of the Border—J. M. Brown (53 m.)...Jan. 31
 317 Charlie Chan in Secret Service—Toler.....Feb. 14
 318 Voodoo Man—Lugosi-Carradine.....Feb. 21
 311 Million Dollar Kid—East Side Kids.....Feb. 28
 321 Sweethearts of the U. S. A.—Merkel-Novis...Mar. 7
 363 Arizona Whirlwind—Trail Blazers (59 m.)...Mar. 7
 353 Partners of the Trail—J. M. Brown (55 m.)...Mar. 14
 Hot Rhythm—Lowery-Drake.....Apr. 7
 301 Lady Let's Dance—Belita.....Apr. 11

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(No National Release Dates)

Block 3

- 4311 Henry Aldrich, Boy Scout—Lydon.....
 4312 Miracle of Morgan's Creek—Hutton-Bracken.....
 4313 Timber Queen—Arlen-Hughes.....
 4314 Standing Room Only—Goddard-MacMurray.....
 4315 The Uninvited—Milland-Hussey.....

Block 4

- 4316 The Navy Way—Lowery-Parker.....
 4317 The Hour Before Dawn—Lake-Tone.....
 4318 You Can't Ration Love—Rhodes-Johnston.....
 4319 Going My Way—Crosby-Stevens.....
 4320 The Hitler Gang—Kosleck-Watson.....

Specials

- 4338 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman.....
 4336 Lady in the Dark—Rogers-Milland.....
 4337 The Story of Dr. Wassell—Cooper-Day.....

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

- 403 Career Girl—Langford-Norris.....Jan. 11
 408 Nabonga—Crabbe-D'Orsay.....Jan. 25
 454 Outlaw Roundup—Texas Rangers No. 4
 (55 m.).....Feb. 10
 409 Men on Her Mind—Hughes-Norris.....Feb. 12
 462 Frontier Outlaw—Crabbe No. 5.....Mar. 4
 414 Lady in the Death House—Atwill-Parker...Mar. 15
 463 Thundering Gun Slingers—Crabbe No. 5.....Mar. 25
 413 Gangsters' Den—Krugger-Horton.....Mar. 29

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway New York 19, N. Y.)

- 353 Pride of the Plains—Livingston (56 m.)...Jan. 5
 341 Hands Across the Border—Roy Rogers
 (73 m.).....Jan. 5
 3301 Rootin' Tootin' Rhythm—Autry (reissue)
 (61 m.).....Jan. 15
 9002X Women At War—Elsie Janis (reissue)
 (69 m.).....Jan. 25
 311 The Fighting Seabees—Wayne-Hayward...Feb. 19
 333 Casanova in Burlesque—Brown-Havoc...Feb. 18
 3302 The Big Show—Autry (reissue).....Mar. 1
 354 Beneath Western Skies—Livingston (56m) Mar. 3
 377 Mojave Firebrand—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.) Mar. 19

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No National Release Dates)

Block 3

- 411 Around the World—Kyser-Davis.....
 412 The Ghost Ship—Richard Dix.....

- 413 Tarzan's Desert Mystery—Weissmuller-Kelly.....
 414 Rookies in Burma—Brown-Carney.....
 415 Higher and Higher—Sinatra-Haley-Morgan.....

Block 4

- 416 Tender Comrade—Rogers-Ryan.....
 417 Passport to Destiny—Lanchester-Oliver.....
 418 Curse of the Cat People—Simon-Smith.....
 419 Escape to Danger—Portman-Dvorak.....
 420 Action in Arabia—Sanders-Bruce.....

Special

- 451 The North Star—Baxter-Huston.....

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 5

- 415 Happy Land—Ameche-Dee.....Dec. 3
 416 The Gang's All Here—Faye-Miranda.....Dec. 24

Block 6

- 417 The Lodger—Sanders-Oberon.....Jan. 7
 418 Uncensored—English cast.....Jan. 21
 419 Lifeboat—Bankhead-Bendix.....Jan. 28

Block 7

- 420 Jane Eyre—Fontaine-Welles.....Feb.
 421 The Sullivans—Mitchell-Baxter.....Feb.

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Jack London—O'Shea-Hayward.....Dec. 24
 Woman of the Town—Dekker-Trevor.....Dec. 31
 Three Russian Girls—Sten-Smith.....Jan. 14
 Knickerbocker Holiday—Eddy-Coburn.....Jan. 28
 Bridge of San Luis Rey—Bari-Calhern.....Feb. 11
 It Happened Tomorrow—Powell-Darnell.....Feb. 25
 Voice in the Wind—Lederer-Gurie.....Mar. 10
 Song of the Open Road—Bergen-O'Neill.....Mar. 24
 Up in Mabel's Room—Patrick-Hubbard.....Apr. 7
 Strange Confession—Sanders-Darnell.....Apr. 21
 The Hairy Ape—Bendix-Hayward.....May 9

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 8064 Gung Ho!—Randolph Scott.....Dec. 31
 8034 Sing A Jingle—Allan Jones.....Jan. 7
 8003 Ali Baba & the Forty Thieves—Montez-Hall...Jan. 14
 8021 Spider Woman—Rathbone-Sondergaard...Jan. 21
 8083 Marshal of Gunsmoke—Tex Ritter (58 m.)...Jan. 21
 Phantom Lady—Tone-Raines.....Jan. 28
 8020 Swingtime Johnny—Andrews Sisters.....Feb. 4
 8066 The Imposter—Gabin-Whorf.....Feb. 11
 Weekend Pass—O'Driscoll-Beery.....Feb. 18
 Chip Off the Old Block—O'Connor-Ryan...Feb. 25
 Hat Check Honey—McDonald-Errol.....Mar. 10
 8084 Oklahoma Raiders—Tex Ritter (57 m.)...Mar. 17
 Ladies Courageous—Young-Fitzgerald...Mar. 17
 Hi, Good Lookin'—Harriet Hilliard.....Mar. 24
 Follow the Boys—All star cast.....Apr. 7
 Weird Woman—Chaney-Gwynne.....Apr. 14
 Her Primitive Man—Allbritton-Paige.....Apr. 21
 Moon Over Las Vegas—Gwynne-Bruce....Apr. 28

Warner-First National Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 309 Destination Tokyo—Grant-Garfield.....Jan. 1
 310 The Desert Song—Morgan-Manning.....Jan. 29
 224 This is the Army—Murphy-Leslie.....Feb. 15
 311 In Our Time—Henreid-Lupino.....Feb. 19
 325 Frisco Kid—Cagney (reissue) (77 m.)...Mar. 4
 312 Passage to Marseille—Bogart-Rains.....Mar. 11
 Shine on Harvest Moon—Sheridan-Morgan...Apr. 8
 Uncertain Glory—Flynn-Lucas.....Apr. 22

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE**Columbia—One Reel**

5656	Community Sings No. 6 (9½ m.)	Dec. 10
5655	Screen Snapshots No. 5 (9½ m.)	Dec. 17
5657	Community Sings No. 7 (10½ m.)	Dec. 24
5704	Polly Wants a Doctor—Phantasies (6½ m.)	Jan. 6
5954	Film Vodvil No. 4 (9 m.)	Jan. 7
5805	Winged Targets—Sports (reset) (10 m.)	Jan. 7
5856	Screen Snapshots No. 6 (10 m.)	Jan. 14
5503	The Herring Murder Mystery—Color Rhap. (reset) (7 m.)	Jan. 20
5658	Community Sings No. 8 (10 m.)	Jan. 28
5705	Magic Strength—Phantasies (7½ m.)	Feb. 4
5601	Amoozin' But Confoozin'—Li'l Abner (re.)	Feb. 17
5857	Screen Snapshots No. 7 (9 m.)	Feb. 18
5806	Follow Through with Sam Byrd—Sports (reset) (9 m.)	Feb. 18
5659	Community Sings No. 9 (9½ m.)	Feb. 25
5753	The Dream Kids—Fox & Crow (reset)	Feb. 25
5706	Lionel Lion—Phantasies	Mar. 3
5807	Golden Gloves—Sports	Mar. 24
5858	Screen Snapshots No. 8	Mar. 24
5602	Sadie Hawkin's Day—Li'l Abner	Mar. 31
5504	Disillusioned Bluebird—Color Rhap.	Apr. 28

Columbia—Two Reels

5431	To Heir is Human—Merkel (16 m.)	Jan. 14
5432	Dr. Feel My Pulse—Vera Vague (18 m.)	Jan. 21
5166	Jungle Whispers—The Phantom (20 m.)	Jan. 21
5167	The Mystery Well—The Phantom (20 m.)	Jan. 28
5168	In Quest of the Keys—Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 4
5169	The Fire Princess—The Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 11
5170	The Emerald Key—The Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 18
5434	His Tale is Told—Clyde (17½ m.)	Mar. 4
5405	Crash Goes the Hash—Stooges (17 m.)	Feb. 5
5433	Bachelor Daze—Summerville (18 m.)	Feb. 17
5171	The Fangs of the Beast—Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 25
5172	The Road to Zoloz—Phantom (20 m.)	Mar. 3
5173	A Lost City—The Phantom (20 m.)	Mar. 10
5174	Peace in the Jungle—Phantom (20 m.)	Mar. 17
5406	Busy Buddies—Stooges (16½ m.)	Mar. 18
5435	Defective Detectives—Lang-Brendel	Apr. 3

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel**1942-43**

W-455	Baby Puss—Cartoon (8 m.)	Dec. 25
W-456	Strange Innertube—Cartoon (7 m.)	Jan. 22

(More to come)

1943-44

T-511	Through the Colorado Rockies—Traveltalk (10 m.)	Oct. 23
T-512	Grand Canyon, Pride of Creation—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Nov. 27
M-581	My Tomato—Miniature (7 m.)	Dec. 4
M-583	No News is Good News—Miniature (9m.)	Dec. 18
M-582	Kid in Upper Four—Miniature (11 m.)	Dec. 25
T-513	Salt Lake Diversions—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Dec. 25
S-551	Practical Joker—Pete Smith (11 m.)	Jan. 8
T-514	A Day in Death Valley—Traveltalk (10m.)	Jan. 22
T-515	Visiting in St. Louis—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Feb. 19
S-552	Home Maid—Pete Smith (9 m.)	Feb. 19
W-531	Zoot Cat—Cartoon (7 m.)	Feb. 26
T-516	Mackinac Island—Traveltalk	Mar. 18

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels**1942-43**

A-403	Shoe Shine Boy—Special (15 m.)	Dec. 25
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(More to come)

1943-44

X-510	Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.)	Jan. 1
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Paramount—One Reel

R3-3	G. I. Fun—Sportlight (9 m.)	Dec. 24
E3-2	Marry Go Round—Popeye (8 m.)	Dec. 31
L3-2	Unusual Occupations No. 2 (10 m.)	Jan. 7
R3-4	Swimcapades—Sportlight (9 m.)	Jan. 14
U3-3	Package for Jasper—Mad. Mod. (8 m.)	Jan. 21
Y3-2	In Winter Quarters—Speaking of Animals (9 m.)	Jan. 28
D3-1	Eggs Don't Bounce—Little Lulu (reset) (8m.)	Jan. 28
J3-3	Popular Science No. 3 (10 m.)	Feb. 4
R3-5	Open Fire—Sportlight (9 m.)	Feb. 18
P3-2	Henpecked Rooster—Noveltoons	Feb. 18
D3-2	Hullaba Lulu—Little Lulu	Feb. 25
L3-3	Unusual Occupations No. 3	Mar. 3
U3-4	Say Ah, Jasper—Mad. Mod.	Mar. 10
Y3-3	In The Newsreels—Speaking of Animals	Mar. 17
R3-6	Heroes on the Mend—Sportlight	Mar. 24
P3-3	Cilly Goose—Noveltoons	Mar. 24
D3-3	Lulu Gets Her Birdie—Little Lulu	Mar. 31

Paramount—Two Reels

FF3-1	Mardi Gras—Musical Parade (20 m.)	Oct. 1
FF3-2	Carribean Romance—Musical Parade (20m.)	Dec. 17
FF3-3	Lucky Cowboy—Musical Parade (20 m.)	Feb. 11

RKO—One Reel**1942-43**

34110	Home Defense—Disney (8 m.)	Oct. 29
34111	Chicken Little—Disney (9 m.)	Dec. 17
34112	Pelican and the Snipe—Disney (9 m.)	Jan. 7
34113	How to be a Sailor—Disney (7 m.)	Jan. 28
34114	Trombone Trouble—Disney	Feb. 18
34115	How to Play Golf—Disney	Mar. 10
34116	Donald Duck & the Gorilla—Disney	Mar. 31
34117	Columbia Candor—Disney	Apr. 21

(More to come)

1943-44

44201	Flicker Flashbacks No. 1 (9 m.)	Sept. 3
44301	Field Trial Champions—Sportscope (9 m.)	Sept. 10
44202	Flicker Flashbacks No. 2 (9 m.)	Oct. 1
44302	Joe Kirkwood—Sportscope (9 m.)	Oct. 8
44203	Flicker Flashbacks No. 3 (9 m.)	Oct. 29
44303	Stars and Strikes—Sportscope (9 m.)	Nov. 5
44204	Flicker Flashbacks No. 4 (9 m.)	Nov. 26
44304	Mountain Anglers—Sportscope (9 m.)	Dec. 3
44205	Flicker Flashbacks No. 5 (9 m.)	Dec. 24
44305	Co-ed Sports—Sportscope (8 m.)	Dec. 31
44206	Flicker Flashbacks No. 6 (9 m.)	Jan. 21

RKO—Two Reels

43402	Unlucky Dog—Edgar Kennedy (15 m.)	Nov. 12
43101	Sailors All—This is America (18 m.)	Nov. 19
43204	Music Will Tell—Head. Rev. (18 m.)	Dec. 3
43102	Letter to a Hero—This is America (18 m.)	Dec. 17
43703	Wedtime Stories—Leon Errol (17½ m.)	Dec. 24
43403	Prunes and Politics—Edgar Kennedy (16m.)	Jan. 7
43103	New Prisons—New Men—This is America (17 m.)	Jan. 14

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

4510	The Helicopter—Terrytoon (7 m.)	Jan. 21
4951	The Biter Bit—Special (10 m.)	Jan. 28
4155	Realm of Royalty—Magic Carpet (9 m.)	Feb. 4
4511	The Wreck of the Hespurus—Terry. (7 m.)	Feb. 11
4202	Silver Wings—Adventure (9 m.)	Feb. 18
4512	A Day in June—Terrytoon (7 m.)	Mar. 3
4153	Steamboat on the River—Magic Carpet (9m.)	Mar. 10
4513	The Champion of Justice—Terrytoon (7m.)	Mar. 17
4201	Sails Aloft—Adventure (9 m.)	Mar. 31
4514	The Frog & the Princess—Terry. (7 m.)	Apr. 7
4303	Fun for All—Sports	Apr. 14

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

- Vol. 10 No. 3 Youth in Crisis—March of Time
(18 m.)Nov. 5
Vol. 10 No. 4 Naval Log of Victory—March of Time
(19 m.)Dec. 3
Vol. 10 No. 5 Upbeats in Music—March of Time
(18 m.)Dec. 31
Vol. 10 No. 6 Sweden's Middle Road—March of
Time (18 m.)Jan. 28

Universal—One Reel

- 8354 Wings in Record Time—Var. Views (9 m.)..Dec. 27
8355 Amazing Metropolis—Var. Views (9 m.)...Jan. 17
8356 Magazine Model—Var. Views (9 m.).....Jan. 24
8375 Mrs. Lowell Thomas, Fur Farmer—
Personal Oddities (9 m.)Jan. 31
8357 Animal Tricks—Var. Views (9 m.).....Feb. 21
8376 The Barefoot Judge—Per. Odd. (9 m.).....Feb. 28
8377 Aviation Expert—Per. Odd. (9 m.).....Mar. 20
8232 The Greatest Man in Siam—Swing
Symphony (7 m.)Mar. 27
8358 Hobo News—Var. Views (9 m.).....Mar. 27

Universal—Two Reels

- 8124 Radio Melodies—Musical (15 m.)Dec. 29
8125 New Orleans Blues—Musical (15 m.).....Jan. 26
8126 Sweet Swing—Musical (15 m.).....Feb. 23
8112 With the Marines at Tarawa—Special.....Mar. 1
8127 Fellow on a Furlough—Musical (15 m.)....Mar. 29

Vitaphone—One Reel

- 9503 Into the Clouds—Sports (10 m.).....Jan. 1
9305 Cross Country Detours—Mer. Mel.
(reissue) (7 m.)Jan. 15
9403 Hunting the Devil Cat—Varieties
(reset) (10 m.)Jan. 22
9504 Baa Baa Blacksheep—Sports (10 m.).....Jan. 22
9701 Meatless Fly Day—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....Jan. 29
9605 Ted Weems Merchant Marine Band—
Mel. Mas. (10 m.)Jan. 29
9306 Hiawatha's Rabbit Hunt—Mer. Mel.
(reissue) (7 m.)Feb. 12
9702 Tom Turk & Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....Feb. 12
9705 Dogie Roundup—Sports (10 m.).....Feb. 26
9721 The Three Bears—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....Feb. 26
9404 Struggle for Life—Varieties (10 m.).....Mar. 4
9703 I've Got Plenty of Mutton—Mer. Mel. (7m).Mar. 11
9307 The Bear's Tale—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.)Mar. 11
9606 Songs of the Range—Mel. Mas. (10 m.)....Mar. 18
9506 Chinatown Champs—Sports (10 m.).....Mar. 18
9704 The Weekly Reporter—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)...Mar. 25
9705 Tick Toek Tuckered—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)....Apr. 8
9308 Sweet Sioux—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)...Apr. 8
9722 Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips—Mer. Mel.
(7 m.)Apr. 22
9507 Backyard Golf—Sports (10 m.).....Apr. 22
9706 The Swooner Crooner—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)...May 6
9607 Rudy Vallee's Coast Guard Band—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.)May 6
9508 Philippine Sports Parade—Sports (10 m.)...May 13
9309 Of Fox & Hounds—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.)May 13

Vitaphone—Two Reels

- 9109 Gun to Gun—Sante Fe Western (20 m.)....Jan. 8
9103 Grandfather's Follies—Featurette (20 m.)...Feb. 5
9110 Roaring Guns—Sante Fe Western (20 m.)...Feb. 19
9100 Italian Frontier—Featurette (20 m.).....Mar. 25
9111 Wells Fargo Days—Sante Fe Western (20m).Apr. 15
9005 Winners Circle—Featurette (20 m.).....Apr. 29

**NEWSWEEKLY
NEW YORK
RELEASE DATES****Pathe News**

- 45149 Sat. (O)...Feb. 12
45250 Wed. (E)...Feb. 16
45151 Sat. (O)...Feb. 19
45252 Wed. (E)...Feb. 23
45153 Sat. (O)...Feb. 26
45254 Wed.(E)...Mar. 1
45155 Sat. (O)...Mar. 4
45256 Wed.(E)...Mar. 8
45157 Sat. (O)...Mar. 11
45258 Wed.(E)...Mar. 15
45159 Sat. (O)...Mar. 18
45260 Wed.(E)...Mar. 22
45161 Sat. (O)...Mar. 25
45262 Wed.(E)...Mar. 29
45163 Sat. (O)...Apr. 1

Metrotone News

- 245 Tues. (O)...Feb. 15
246 Thurs. (E)...Feb. 17
247 Tues. (O)...Feb. 22
248 Thurs. (E)...Feb. 24
249 Tues. (O)...Feb. 29
250 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 2
251 Tues. (O)...Mar. 7
252 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 9
253 Tues. (O)...Mar. 14
254 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 16
255 Tues. (O)...Mar. 21
256 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 23
257 Tues. (O)...Mar. 28
258 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 30
259 Tues. (O)...Apr. 4

Paramount News

- 47 Sunday (O)...Feb. 13
48 Thurs. (E)...Feb. 17
49 Sunday (O)...Feb. 20
50 Thurs. (E)...Feb. 24
51 Sunday (O)...Feb. 27
52 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 2
53 Sunday (O)...Mar. 5
54 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 9
55 Sunday (O)...Mar. 12
56 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 16
57 Sunday (O)...Mar. 19
58 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 23
59 Sunday (O)...Mar. 26
60 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 30
61 Sunday (O)...Apr. 2

Universal

- 266 Fri. (E)...Feb. 11
267 Wed. (O)...Feb. 16
268 Fri. (E)...Feb. 18
269 Wed. (O)...Feb. 23
270 Fri. (E)...Feb. 25
271 Wed. (O)...Mar. 1
272 Fri. (E)...Mar. 3
273 Wed. (O)...Mar. 8
274 Fri. (E)...Mar. 10
275 Wed. (O)...Mar. 15
276 Fri. (E)...Mar. 17
277 Wed. (O)...Mar. 22
278 Fri. (E)...Mar. 24
279 Wed. (O)...Mar. 29
280 Fri. (E)...Mar. 31

Fox Movietone

- 47 Tues. (O)...Feb. 15
48 Thurs. (E)...Feb. 17
49 Tues. (O)...Feb. 22
50 Thurs. (E)...Feb. 24
51 Tues. (O)...Feb. 29
52 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 2
53 Tues. (O)...Mar. 7
54 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 9
55 Tues. (O)...Mar. 14
56 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 16
57 Tues. (O)...Mar. 21
58 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 23
59 Tues. (O)...Mar. 28
60 Thurs. (E)...Mar. 30
61 Tues. (O)...Apr. 4

**All American News
(Negro Newsreel)**

- 68 FridayFeb. 11
69 FridayFeb. 18
70 FridayFeb. 25
71 FridayMar. 3
72 FridayMar. 10
73 FridayMar. 17
74 FridayMar. 24
75 FridayMar. 31

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Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1944

No. 9

Beware! Columbia Is At It Again!

Abe Montague, Columbia's general sales manager, has announced that his company's annual sales campaign, which has been labeled "Dates to Win" and is now under way, has been dedicated to its sales force "as a tribute to . . . the part it has played in cementing exhibitor friendship and good will for the company."

I wonder if Abe Montague kept a straight face when he made this statement.

According to Montague, during the time covered by the campaign, which terminates on June 22, "Columbia will release some of the most important pictures it has ever offered."

Montague's statement is incomplete; he should have said: "Columbia will release some of the most important pictures it has ever offered *twice*."

In addition to "Sahara," "What a Woman!" and "None Shall Escape," which are currently in release, Montague has announced the following important pictures as scheduled for release during the sales campaign:

"Cover Girl," a Technicolor production, with Rita Hayworth; "Curly," with Cary Grant; "Address Unknown," with Paul Lukas; "Pilebuck," with Pat O'Brien; "Mr. Winkle Goes to War," with Edward G. Robinson; "Road to Yesterday," with Irene Dunne; "Tonight and Every Night," a Technicolor production, with Rita Hayworth (this feature's former title was "Heart of a City"); and a musical starring Kay Kyser and his orchestra. Included also for release are eight minor program pictures of different types.

From the viewpoint of star values, no one can deny that it is an impressive list. From the viewpoint of a Columbia promise, however, past performances make it most unimpressive.

To those of you who are unfamiliar with some of Columbia's promises, and with the manner in which it treats its customers, a short review may be in order.

Of the pictures listed above, the following were promised to Columbia's 1942-43 contract-holders and, after failure to deliver, promised again to the 1943-44 contract-holders:

"Cover Girl," "Tonight and Every Night," "Curly," "Road to Yesterday," "What a Woman!" "Sahara," and "Mr. Winkle Goes to War."

Of the aforementioned seven pictures, "Tonight

and Every Night" and "Road to Yesterday" have not yet been put in production. Keep your eye on them—and don't be too surprised if they should be held back once again and dangled as bait for prospective 1944-45 contract-holders. Incidentally, the Kay Kyser picture, announced for release during the sales campaign, has not yet gone before the cameras. This production, too, will bear watching.

Here are some more facts that may be indicative of Columbia's future plans. Conspicuous by their absence from the list of pictures to be released during the "Dates to Win" campaign are the following important productions, which were announced by Columbia as part of its 1943-44 program, and which undoubtedly were instrumental in impelling many exhibitors to sign contracts:

An untitled Jean Arthur production; "The Life of Al Jolson"; "At Night We Dream," with Paul Muni; "Gone Are the Days," a Technicolor picture starring Rita Hayworth; and "Knights Without Armor." These last two productions had been part of the eight important pictures Columbia promised but failed to deliver to its 1942-43 contract holders. With the exception of "At Night We Dream," none of these pictures has yet been put into production. It will be interesting to see what percentage of them, if any, will be delivered this season as promised.

HARRISON'S REPORTS' purpose in bringing these facts to the attention of the exhibitors is to put them on their guard against Columbia's notorious tactics, which have earned for it the dubious honor of being called "the company of worthless promises."

The Columbia salesmen, fortified by their company's glowing account of the pictures intended for release within the next few months, are ready to descend upon you with many glib promises, just to get your signature on a contract. You should expect these promises to be even more voluble than they have been in the past, for this time the salesmen will be aiming for some of the cash awards offered to them in the campaign. But remember that, no matter what a salesman tells you, his company cannot be held responsible except for the promises actually written in the contract.

HARRISON'S REPORTS says, "Beware!" If you want to be sure of getting the pictures, first get the promises in writing—as part of your contract.

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE TRULY INDEPENDENT EXHIBITORS

(Continued from last week)

V. SECTIONS V TO X, INCLUSIVE

(Ed. Note: The above heading refers to Sections V to X of the original Consent Decree.)

Sec. V. *Licensing in more than one exchange district.* Calling this provision "unrealistic" and "easy of invasion," the report states that its retention is a matter of indifference.

Sec. VI. *Licensing on some run.* The conference joins with the distributors in recommending that this provision be retained in its present form.

Sec. VII. *Immoral pictures.* The conference joins with the distributors in recommending the adoption of this proposal, which is an improvement over the corresponding provision in the original decree.

Sec. VIII. *Clearance.* Expressing dissatisfaction with the "unfair and unwarranted" interpretations given to this provision, the report recommends that the definition of clearance contained in the distributors' proposals be eliminated, and that the following paragraph in Section VIII be eliminated also:

"It is recognized that clearance, reasonable as to time and area, is essential in the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures.

In substitution of the passages to be eliminated, the report recommends the insertion in Section VIII of the following:

"Clearance means the period of time, either fixed by agreement between a distributor and an exhibitor, or by general practice, prior to the expiration of which a feature licensed for prior exhibition in a theatre may not be exhibited in another competitive theatre or theatres.

"It is recognized that clearance which is commensurate with the degree of competition existing between the theatres involved is essential in the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures.

"Where there is no competition between the theatres involved, or where the competition is so slight as to have no substantial economic effect, there should be no clearance.

"For the purpose of this section clearance shall date from the beginning of the run of a picture in the first theatre of the exhibitor having the prior run."

Sec. IX. *Withholding prints.* The conference considers the distributors' proposal an improvement over the corresponding provision in the original decree, and recommends its adoption.

Sec. X. *Licensing on a particular run.* Pointing out that this provision in the original decree has been ineffective, because it is "so hedged about with restrictions and conditions," the report states that the distributors' present proposal, though an improvement, has many defects, and that the remedy provided still is too ineffective and inconclusive to warrant the risk and expense of instituting a proceeding thereunder.

Because of the complexity of the distributors' proposal, the conference, to best present its recommendations for changes, has re-drafted the entire provision as follows:

"SECTION X

"A. Controversies arising upon a complaint by an exhibitor that a distributor defendant has arbitrarily refused to license its features for exhibition on the run requested by said exhibitor in one of said exhibitor's theatres shall be subject to arbitration.

"B. In any such arbitration no award shall be made against the distributor defendant or defendants unless the arbitrator shall first find the following facts:

"1. That the complainant is an independent exhibitor, i.e., that he is wholly independent of any producer or distributor of motion pictures; that no producer or distributor, and no controlled corporation of any producer or distributor operates, controls or has any financial or proprietary

interest in his theatre or theatres; and that complainant was operating the theatre specified in his complaint at the time of filing the demand for arbitration; and

"2. That the theatre having the run of pictures requested by the complainant is a circuit theatre, i.e., is a component of a group of theatres the several components of which are affiliated with each other by stock ownership, common ownership, or otherwise, or licenses for which are negotiated by a buying combine or common agent, and which possess in the aggregate at least double the total film buying power of the complainant; and

"3. That the complainant submitted to the distributor defendant or defendants bona fide offers to license for exhibition on the run and in the theatre specified in the complaint at least five successively released features distributed by said distributor defendant or defendants during the current motion picture season and said distributor defendant or defendants failed or refused to license the exhibition of said features to said theatres on the run requested; and

"4. The complainant did not have available features sufficient in nature and quantity to enable him to operate his theatre on the run requested by him; and

"5. That such refusal to license the exhibition of said features in the complainant's said theatre was arbitrary in that it was not based on any good, substantial or valid business consideration, but was in fact because the theatre licensed on the requested run was a circuit theatre, which fact shall be a matter of inference to be drawn by the arbitrator from all the evidence, particularly the evidence adduced pursuant to Paragraph C.

"C. In considering whether the exhibitor's complaint is established by the evidence, the arbitrator shall take into consideration, among other things, the following factors and accord to them the importance and weight to which each is entitled, regardless of the order in which they are listed: (1) the terms, if any, offered in good faith in respect of each of the two contending theatres, considered as units and not as a part of a circuit; (2) the seating capacity of each of said theatres; (3) the capacity of each for producing revenue for the distributors when operating on the run requested; (4) the character, appearance and condition of each, including its furnishings, equipment and conveniences; (5) the location of each of said theatres; (6) the character and extent of the area and population which each serves; (7) the competitive conditions in the area in which they are located; (8) their comparative suitability for the exhibition of the distributor's features on the run requested; (9) the character, ability and good will of the exhibitor operating each and his reputation generally in the industry and in the community for showmanship, honesty and fair dealing; (10) the policy under which each of the theatres has been operated and the policy under which the complainant proposes to operate his theatre if he is awarded the run requested; (11) the financial responsibility of the exhibitor operating each of said theatres insofar as the conduct of his business as an exhibitor is concerned; (12) and the distributor's prior relations with each of the two theatres involved and with their owners and operators and any equities arising therefrom.

"D. If in any such arbitration the arbitrator finds for the complainant he shall make an award against the distributor defendant or defendants which shall prohibit said defendant or defendants from thereafter offering its or their feature pictures on the run in question to the said circuit theatre without first offering the same to the complainant for exhibition on said run in his theatre specified in the complaint, on terms and conditions fixed by the distributor defendant or defendants which are not calculated to defeat the purpose of this section; provided, that any distributor defendant affected by such an award may institute a further arbitration proceeding to be relieved therefrom on the ground that since the making of the award the granting of the requested run to the complainant in compliance therewith has had the effect of reducing the distributor's total film rental in the competitive area in which complainant's said theatre is located and, in the event that the arbitrator finds that the granting of the run to complainant in compliance with the award has in fact had the effect of reducing the distributor's total film revenue in the said area, he shall vacate the award."

VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The conference makes no suggestion relative to the following provisions of the decree, except as noted:

Sec. XII. Pooling agreements; Sec. XIII. Applicable only to continental United States; Sec. XIV. Roadshows (except that a roadshow should be defined as described elsewhere in the report); Sec. XV. No contempt proceedings except for refusal to arbitrate, etc.; Sec. XVI. Licensing owned or controlled theatres; Sec. XVII. Examining books and records; Sec. XVIII. Selecting own customers; and Sec. XIX. Effective date.

Sec. XX. Test Period. Pointing out that the tenor and substance of their proposals manifest the distributors' "grudging and unyielding spirit," the report states that it would be foolhardy to assume that the distributors would respect an amended and supplemental decree any more than they respected the provisions of the original decree, or that they will not devise methods and means to circumvent the amended and supplemental provisions.

Accordingly, the conference rejects the distributors' proposal for a ten year test period, and recommends that the test period under an amended and supplemental decree should not exceed three years.

Sec. XXII. Retention of jurisdiction. Charging that the distributors' proposals provide for only a consenting defendant to apply to the Court for modifications of the decree, the report deplors the omission of a similar right for the Government, and urges strongly the adoption of the provision contained in the original decree, which granted the Government that right.

VII. ARBITRATION

1. *Counsel.* In the opinion of the conference, one of the main reasons for the independent exhibitors' dissatisfaction with the arbitration system is the fact that the distributors and their affiliated circuits have available batteries of lawyers with wide experience in motion picture affairs, whereas counsel with comparable knowledge of the business are not available to the independent exhibitor complainants.

To make the system function efficiently, the conference recommends the establishment "in each film exchange center where there is located a Local Tribunal a sort of prosecutor who shall be chosen and compensated by the Administrator, whose duty it shall be to represent the complainants in arbitration proceedings whenever requested by the complainants so to do, and shall by reason of his participation in numerous proceedings acquire a knowledge of the business and a skill in the conduct of arbitration proceedings comparable to that of the defendants' counsel."

2. *Appeal Board.* Although it recognized that there had been much criticism of the Appeal Board because of its location in New York City, close to the distributors' home offices, and distant from the territories in which a majority of the proceedings originate, the conference, nevertheless, appreciated the value of a central appeal board to reconcile the conflicts among the tribunals as to the proper interpretation of the decree.

To satisfy independent exhibitors generally, the conference recommends the following:

"Whenever a complainant so elects the Local Tribunal may be composed of three arbitrators to be chosen from the panel in the usual manner to hear and determine his case. In that event, the findings as to the facts and conclusions of the specially constituted tribunal shall be final and conclusive except to the extent that the conclusions involve or are based upon an interpretation of one or more provisions of the amended and supplemental decree. In such cases the Appeal Board's power of review would be limited to interpretations of the decree* and to determining whether there had been any misconduct on the part of the arbitrators.

"A complainant wishing to follow the established procedure with a single arbitrator and a right of full review by the Appeal Board would be free to do so."

3. *Rules.* The report states that the conference did not have time to consider and make recommendations concern-

ing the Rules of Arbitration, but that it may reconvene at a later date should it become necessary to take action regarding these rules.

VIII. MONOPOLISTIC PRACTICES FOR WHICH THE PROPOSALS PROVIDE NO REMEDY

In this section of the report, the conference calls attention to the fact that a negotiated decree serves only to curb, not to eliminate, the monopolistic practices of the distributor defendants. Pointing out that the distributors' proposals touch upon only a few of the many unfair and discriminatory practices cited in the Government's original Bill of Complaint, the report enumerates several of the neglected allegations and recommends that the Government insist that a remedy be provided for as many of these abuses as possible.

"Most of the enumerated practices," continues the report, "deal directly or indirectly with film rentals; and the conference was fully aware of the difficulties inherent in any attempt to deal with that subject in a consent decree. Nevertheless, the highly restricted film market . . . is a direct result of the defendants' monopoly; and that restricted market places the independent exhibitor completely at the mercy of the little group of willful men who dominate the major distributing companies. So long as the consenting defendants control at least 90% of the larger first run theatres, the market will continue to be closed to new producers and distributors, and competition . . . cannot come into play; and just so long as the market remains monopolized, the terms and conditions imposed upon the independent exhibitors can and undoubtedly will become more and more onerous and even confiscatory."

Citing the Government's Bill of Complaint, the report lists the following monopolistic practices contained therein, which have been ignored in the distributors' proposals:

1. *"Arbitrary designation of playdates."* This abuse, states the report, serves to extort maximum film rentals and extends the distributors' control over the operating policies of independent theatres.

2. *"Arbitrary, unconscionable and discriminatory film rentals."* Charging that competitive conditions cannot be restored, and that the position of independent exhibitors cannot be made secure, until a method is devised to prevent the forcing of percentage engagements, the report states that "there is more than a mere trade practice or selling method at stake; by forced percentage engagements the distributors force themselves into an unwelcome partnership with the exhibitors and bring the latter's theatres under their domination and control just as effectively as though they were acquired under Sec. XI of the decree."

As a solution, the conference recommends that the distributors be required to offer all percentage pictures on a separate contract, so that an exhibitor would not be compelled to license these pictures as a condition of obtaining other flat rental pictures in a group.

3. *"Benefits, favors and advantages extended by the defendants to each other."*

(a) *"Sharing advertising costs."*

(b) *"Optional contracts."* Charging that the distributors revise their contract forms from time to time, always to the detriment of the independent exhibitors, the conference felt that it would be consistent with the purpose of the decree to include a provision requiring that, during the pendency of the *ad interim* decree, the defendant distributors obtain the permission of the Court or the Government before changing the contract form in any way that might adversely affect the exhibitors, and that the exhibitors be given the right to be heard regarding proposed changes in the contract forms.

HARRISON'S REPORTS believes that both the conference and the committee have done a thorough and splendid job. They have analyzed the situation fully; they have studied its implications profoundly; and they have reported their findings and recommendations clearly and succinctly.

Most of their suggestions are basic, reflecting exhibitor demands of long standing. Some of the suggestions are novel, reflecting, no doubt, a new approach to an old problem. They should be given careful consideration, because they come from exhibitor leaders whose experience and earnestness command respect for their views.

*A precedent for this is the Criminal Appeal Act (U. S. C. A., Tit. 18, Ch. 682) which limits the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to questions involving the construction or validity of a statute.

"See Here, Private Hargrove" with Robert Walker and Donna Reed

(MGM, no release date set; time, 100 min.)

Based on Marion Hargrove's best-seller novel of the same title, this comedy with an army background is amusing mass entertainment. The story, which revolves around the misadventures of a rookie in training, drags somewhat in spots, but that does not appreciably reduce the film's entertaining quality, for it is a pleasant blend of romance and comedy. Robert Walker, as the recruit, is very good. Some of the predicaments he gets himself into are extremely comical. A laugh-provoking situation is the one in which Walker, granted a furlough and needing money to visit his girl, virtually signs his life over to his buddies in order to obtain a loan. Donna Reed, as Walker's sweetheart, gives an engaging performance:—

Drafted into the Army, Robert Walker, a naive cub reporter, quickly makes friends with fellow-privates Keenan Wynn, William Phillips, and George Offerman, Jr. Walker finds himself continually assigned to K.P. because of his ineptitude. Noticing that Walker was attracted to Donna Reed, a hostess in a canteen, Wynn, who had a knack for turning everything to his own financial advantage, pretends that he operated a "date bureau" and sells Walker a date with Donna. When Walker calls on her, Donna, seeing the humor in his predicament, keeps the date. Both fall in love. Walker becomes a model soldier, hoping that he will be granted a furlough so that he could visit Donna, who had returned to her home in New York. He is placed in charge of a gun crew during practice games and, because of his blundering, is captured by the "enemy." Expecting that his furlough will be cancelled, Walker spends his savings. The furlough, however, comes through on schedule, and Walker is virtually compelled to sign away his future life's earnings in order to borrow enough money from his three buddies for a trip to New York. Returning to camp after a glorious time with Donna, Walker is persuaded by Wynn to get themselves "soft" jobs in the public relations department. Both are labelled "yellow" by their buddies, who break friendship with them. Learning that their old battery was going overseas, the boys take steps to be transferred back and succeed in re-joining their buddies.

Harry Kurnitz wrote the screen play, George Haight produced it, and Wesley Ruggles directed it. The cast includes Robert Benchley, Ray Collins, Chill Wills, Grant Mitchell and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Nine Girls" with Ann Harding, Jinx Falkenburg and Anita Louise

(Columbia, February 17; time, 79 min.)

A mildly entertaining program murder-mystery melodrama with comedy situations, most of which are pretty silly. Most of the comedy is ineffective because it is forced. The story is far-fetched, and is developed in an unbelievable way. Moreover, the outcome is obvious; and, although the murderess is not identified until the end, it is simple for one to guess her identity long before then. No fault can be found with the performances, but there is not much that the players could do with the material on hand:—

When Anita Louise, a member of an exclusive girls' sorority, is found murdered, Police Captain Willard Robertson and William Demarest, his aide, go to the sorority's mountain lodge to investigate. There they find Jinx Falkenburg, Lynn Merrick, Leslie Brooks, Evelyn Keyes, Jeff Donnell, Nina Foch, Shirley Mills, and Marcia Mae Jones, who were being chaperoned by Ann Harding. Robertson learns that Anita had been disliked by the other girls, each of whom had threatened her at one time. He holds the girls

as suspects and orders them to remain in the lodge. Suspecting one another of the crime, the girls snoop about the lodge all through the night, much to the consternation of Demarest, who had been left to guard them. Evelyn, worried lest circumstantial evidence point to her as the murderess, confides in Miss Harding. On the following night, Miss Harding, under the pretense of helping Evelyn, tricks her into writing a letter that could be interpreted as a confession, then attempts to poison her. But the sudden entrance of one of the girls spoils her plan. After a series of other happenings Robertson, tricks Miss Harding into revealing herself as the murderess. She confesses that she killed Anita because of her constant interference with her plans to marry Lester Matthews, Anita's father.

Karen DeWold and Connie Lee wrote the screen play, Burt Kelly produced it, and Leigh Jason directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Purple Heart" with Dana Andrews and Sam Levene

(20th Century-Fox, March release; time, 99 min.)

A powerful drama; it grips one throughout. The story, which revolves around the farcical trial of eight captured American flyers charged with deliberately bombing and machine-gunning civilians during the raid on Japan, is the first major production to deal with Japanese atrocities, of which much has been brought to light in recent weeks. In spite of the fact that it is a grim picture, public interest should be of considerable help at the box-office. The tortures undergone by the flyers are not actually shown, but the condition in which they are returned to their cell is so indicative of the inhumanities they had suffered that it sends shudders through one. As a matter of fact, women may find it a bit too strong. The action, which is divided between the Americans' cell and a Japanese courtroom, keeps one in tense suspense. The film is a strong indictment of the Japanese and, at the same time, a stirring drama; it leaves the spectator proud of American tenacity, because of the flyers' undaunted courage, and determined that Japan be crushed, because of the barbaric instincts inherent in its people:—

Despite their protests that civil courts have no jurisdiction over military prisoners, Dana Andrews, Sam Levene, Richard Conte, John Craven, Kevin O'Shea, Donald Barry, and Farley Granger, crew of a B-25 bomber plane, are compelled to stand trial on charges of bombing civilian objectives. False testimony, fake films, and the denial of the right to cross-examine witnesses soon convince the men that the trial was a mere device set up to justify their conviction. A furor is created, however, when General Richard Loo, Jap Army chief, testifies that the planes came from an aircraft carrier, and his testimony is challenged by Admiral Key Chang, Jap Naval chief; it becomes obvious that both men are trying to shift responsibility on one another for the success of the attack. The trial is recessed and, in the chambers of Peter Chang, the judge, both men submit inconclusive evidence of their claims. Chang demands conclusive evidence, and Loo promises to obtain it. Loo offers the flyers the status of ordinary war prisoners if they will reveal where their planes came from. They refuse. One by one they are beaten and maimed but each remains silent. As a compromise, Loo offers to dismiss the charges against them if they will admit that their superiors had ordered them to bomb civilian objectives. But the men, realizing that Japan would capitalize on the propaganda value of such an admission, reject his offer. Loo, his prestige smashed by the men's courage, commits suicide. Sentenced to die, the Americans leave the courtroom with heads high, gratified that they had frustrated the aims of the Japs.

Jerome Cady wrote the screen play, Darryl F. Zanuck produced it, and Lewis Milestone directed it.

Adult entertainment.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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No. 10

HERE AND THERE

IT SEEMS AS IF Monogram, which has made great forward strides the past few years, is becoming a bit too big for its britches.

In a recent service bulletin, M. A. Rosenberg, president of the Allied Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Western Pennsylvania, takes this company to task for its selling policy on "Where Are Your Children." Stating that Monogram is rating this picture as better than any of its average productions, Rosenberg points out that those exhibitors who have contracted for Monogram's entire product cannot date "Where Are Your Children" unless they have dated all previous releases before or at the time of dating this picture.

Referring to the practice as "using the old black-jack," Rosenberg condemns Monogram for using its first better release to take advantage of its established customers, who have stood by it during harder times.

According to Rosenberg, the success of this picture has caused Monogram's home office personnel, territorial managers, and local sales staffs to strut about like peacocks. He further states that the exchanges, when an exhibitor complains against the practice of their forcing other features as a condition of licensing "Where Are Your Children," absolve themselves by asserting that this policy has been instituted by the home office.

Assuming that Rosenberg's accusations are correct, HARRISON'S REPORTS deems it unfortunate that Monogram, through a short-sighted sales policy, is endangering the good will that it has so carefully built up, particularly in the last few years.

Good will in this business is necessary, and a lack of it is a definite handicap. The artificial product shortage created by the hoarding of pictures by the major companies has given the smaller producing and distributing companies their greatest opportunity in years to line up new accounts. This is the time for them to create good will so that, if one of the coming years should be lean, they may depend on the exhibitor's good will to carry them through.

This paper has always been in sympathy with the efforts of the smaller companies to better their positions, and has always urged the independent exhibitors to support them. It regrets, therefore, to see that one of these companies is resorting to the objectionable practices of some of the major companies.

NOW THAT CONGRESS has passed the tax bill over the President's veto and the bill has become the law of the land, the new admission tax rate of one cent on each five cents or major fraction will become effective on April 1. The law provides that the new rates are temporary, and that they shall end "on the first day of the first month which begins six months or more after the date of the termination of hostilities in the present war."

The exhibitor should bear in mind that the law does not contemplate that he absorb the increase in order to maintain his present rate of admissions. The law provides that the increase shall be paid by the public. An exhibitor who attempts to absorb any part of the tax will compel his competitors to do likewise, thus creating an admission-price war to the detriment of one another. If an admission-price war is to be averted, each exhibitor must adopt a unified policy of collecting the tax from his customers. That is the intent of the law.

The wise exhibitor will take immediate steps to inform his patrons of the pending increase, and to point out that such an increase represents a Government amusement tax. A well conceived publicity campaign should help to lessen the sting when the new rates are put into effect.

* * *

ANOTHER SOUND REASON why exhibitors should not attempt to absorb any part of the tax increase is the fact that the new tax rules add to the cost of operating their theatres. Among the new taxes that will affect theatre operation are the increased rates on electric bulbs and tubes, local and long-distance telephone calls, passenger transportation, and postal service.

* * *

AS MOST OF YOU already know, March 23 to March 29 has been designated as the week in which motion picture theatres will take up collections for the Red Cross War Fund.

The services rendered by the American Red Cross are too well known to need re-telling. Suffice it to say that it is the greatest of humanitarian services.

This paper urges every exhibitor to do his utmost to make the Red Cross drive an outstanding success, for now, more than ever, this great organization deserves the unqualified support of the entire country.

"The Falcon Out West" with Tom Conway (RKO, no release date set; time, 65 min.)

Fair program entertainment. Wherever the previous pictures dealing with the adventures of the "Falcon" have gone over, this, too, should prove acceptable. The story follows the usual formula used in the series—that of combining murder-mystery melodrama with comedy. Though the story lacks plausibility, it is mystifying enough to satisfy the most ardent follower of that type of entertainment. This time the action takes place on a Texas ranch, giving the production a western tang. Tom Conway, continuing his part of the self-appointed detective, plays it with conviction. As in the previous pictures, there is a hint of romance between Conway and the heroine, but in the end they part:—

On the eve of his marriage to Carole Gallagher, a model, Lyle Talbot, a wealthy Texan, dies mysteriously of snake poison while celebrating at a New York night-club. Present as he dies are Tom Conway, a private investigator; Joan Barclay, Talbot's former wife; Don Douglas, Talbot's attorney; and Carole. Conway takes charge of the investigation, but is soon replaced by Police Inspector Cliff Clark and Detective Edward Gargan, with whom he had long been at odds. Pending further investigation, Carole is released in the custody of Douglas. She heads secretly for Talbot's Texas ranch, but Conway and the others learn of her trip and follow her. At the ranch, Conway learns that Carole sought to take possession of the property on the claim that Talbot had deeded it to her. The deed, however, had been stolen from Talbot's safe. When an attempt is made on Carole's life, and it is learned that Minor Watson, Talbot's partner, stood to benefit by Talbot's death, Inspector Clark uncovers evidence pointing to Watson as the possible murderer, and charges him with the crime. Watson's men, endeavoring to protect him, implicate him even more. Meanwhile Conway, not satisfied with the inspector's deductions, carries on an investigation of his own. After a series of happenings, in which suspicion is thrown on the different characters, Conway proves that Carole had murdered Talbot to gain possession of the ranch, and also to marry Lee Trent, the ranch foreman, with whom she was in love.

Billy Jones and Morton Grant wrote the screen plan, Maurice Geraghty produced it, and William Clemens directed it. The cast includes Barbara Hale and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Knickerbocker Holiday" with Nelson Eddy, Charles Coburn and Constance Dowling

(United Artists, no release date set; time, 85 min.)

A humorous musical comedy, based on the Broadway stage play of the same title. The story, which satirizes the Dutch council government of early New York, during the reign of Peter Stuyvesant, is told in terms of music, comedy, and romance. The outstanding feature is the tuneful musical score, which is sung by the different characters in what might be called comic opera style. Nelson Eddy, as the crusading young publisher who fights against Stuyvesant's corrupt administration, carries the burden of the singing in his usual good voice. Charles Coburn provokes much laughter by his roguish portrayal of "Peg-leg" Stuyvesant. The production values are good, and the photography and direction are handled capably:—

New Amsterdam is agog one morning following the announcement that Peter Stuyvesant, the new Governor, will arrive that day. Brom Broeck (Nelson Eddy) writes a biting editorial to the Governor, charging the New Amsterdam councilmen with heavy taxation and destroying the people's rights. Tienhoven (Ernest Cossert), the chief councilman, orders Broeck's arrest. When Stuyvesant, a shrewd politician, arrives and learns why Broeck was arrested, he orders his immediate release and appoints him Secretary of Printing. Exercising dictatorial powers, Stuyvesant ousts the councilmen so that he alone will profit from the taxes. In

the meantime Tienhoven, seeking Stuyvesant's favor, persuades his daughter Tina (Constance Dowling), who was Broeck's sweetheart, to be attentive to the Governor. Stuyvesant, to get Broeck out of the way, sends him on an important mission. When Broeck returns and begins to court Tina, Stuyvesant throws him into jail. Broeck, aided by Tina, manages to escape, and he prints pamphlets accusing Stuyvesant of being a tyrant. After a series of incidents, in which Tina steals Stuyvesant's silver-studded leg to hamper his movements, Broeck succeeds in rousing the people, who demand that the Governor be hung. Broeck hurries to Stuyvesant and compels him to reduce taxes and agree to other reforms. Stuyvesant, addressing the people himself, promises them better government, and announces the marriage of Broeck and Tina.

David Boehm and Rowland Leigh wrote the screen play, and Harry Joe Brown produced and directed it for Producers Corporation of America. The cast includes Otto Kruger, Percy Kilbride, Fritz Feld, Johnny "Scat" Davis, Shelly Winter, Chester Conklin and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Voice in the Wind" with Francis Lederer and Sigrid Gurie

(United Artists, March 10; time, 85 min.)

A grim depressing drama, with a sordid background. Aside from good performances, there is not much in it to recommend; the story is pointless, and it is hardly the type of entertainment motion picture-goers want to see today, for it is cheerless. It may direct some appeal to class audiences because of the excellent classical music score, but its morbid theme and slow-moving action make it unsuitable for the rank and file. As a matter of fact, an audience composed mainly of defense workers, who attended the premiere of this picture in Camden, N. J., shifted about restlessly all through the showing and continuously tittered at scenes that were meant to be dramatic. The low key photography accentuates the film's depressiveness. Produced on a modest budget, the picture was originally slated for distribution by PRC:—

Given permission by the Nazis to present a concert, Francis Lederer, famed Czech pianist, plays "The Moldau," a national air, in defiance of the Nazi ban against it. Realizing that he had incurred the wrath of the Nazis, and that Sigrid Gurie, his fiancée, may suffer at their hands, Lederer manages to smuggle her out of the country. Before he himself can escape, however, he is captured and subjected to violence, which leaves him mentally unbalanced. En route to a concentration camp, Lederer overpowers his guards and escapes. He makes his way to the isle of Gaudalupe, a haven for refugees, where he is tolerated as a harmless half-wit, who lived in a disheveled waterfront shack. He worked, at times, for Alexander Granach, who, together with his unscrupulous brothers (J. Carroll Naish and David Cota), smuggled and murdered refugees escaping from Europe. Lederer would often sit at a piano in a waterfront saloon and improvise music. Unknown to him, Sigrid lay dying across the street in the dingy apartment of J. Edward Bromberg and Olga Fabian, an elderly couple, who had brought her to the isle as a fellow refugee. Sigrid, hearing Lederer's music, makes her way to the street and collapses. She is found by Lederer, who runs off like a frightened animal when a policeman approaches. Meanwhile Naish seeks to harm Lederer; in a semi-lucid moment, the demented man, realizing that he was a pawn of Granach and his brothers, had sunk their murder boat. Naish beats him, and the physical violence snaps Lederer's mind back to normal. Mortally wounded, Lederer stumbles to the bedside of Sigrid, who had died, and collapses on her bed. Both are reunited in death.

Frederick Torberg wrote the screen play from an original story by Arthur Ripley. Rudolph Moner and Mr. Ripley produced it. Mr. Ripley also directed it.

Adult entertainment.

"Sailor's Holiday" with Arthur Lake, Jane Lawrence and Bob Haymes

(Columbia, February 24; time, 60 min.)

Mediocre program fare. Aside from the children, this slapstick comedy will have little appeal for picture-goers in general. As a matter of fact, most adults will find it extremely tiresome. What there is to the story serves merely as a framework for a series of slapstick situations, most of which are stupid, not comical. There are some laughs, but they are few and far between. It rates no better than the lower half of a second-rate mid-week double bill in secondary theatres:

Lewis Wilson, a tough sailor, and Arthur Lake, his ship-mate, come to Hollywood to spend their furlough. The two meet Bob Haymes, a lonesome sailor, and all three go to the apartment of Jane Lawrence, Wilson's girl-friend, whom he planned to marry. At the apartment, Wilson's jealousy is aroused by the presence of Edmund MacDonald, a stunt man, who returns Wilson's dislike. Jane asks Shelley Winters, a movie extra, to spend the evening with Haymes, although she herself preferred the young man to Wilson. Shelley, on the other hand, cared more for Wilson than for Haymes. Plans are made for Jane's and Wilson's marriage on the following night. Haymes confesses to Shelley that he loves Jane, and she admits her love for Wilson. Both agree that it would be to every one's happiness if they all made known their true feelings. On the night of the wedding, Jane, having promised Wilson that many stars would attend their wedding, employs a number of extras to impersonate different movie personalities. After a series of nonsensical happenings, in which MacDonald tries unsuccessfully to keep the preacher from attending the wedding. Shelley convinces Wilson that it would be a mistake for him to marry Jane. It all ends in a double ceremony, with Jane marrying Haymes, and Shelley marrying Wilson.

Manny Seff wrote the screen play, Wallace MacDonald produced it, and William Berke directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Two-Man Submarine" with Tom Neal and Ann Savage

(Columbia, March 16; time, 64 min.)

Routine program fare. It is one of those implausible melodramas, with a war angle, which may get by with the action fans, because it is fast-moving and has a number of exciting moments. Although the title indicates sea action of a sort, actually, the story has little to do with submarine warfare. The action takes place on a South Pacific island, and it revolves around the efforts of an American medical research group to prevent the Japs from obtaining a secret formula having to do with penicillin. The plot is fashioned after familiar ingredients, and the spectator guesses in advance just what is going to happen. Discriminating audiences may find it tiring:—

Tom Neal and Lloyd Bridges, medical research workers on a South Pacific island, carry on experiments for the production of penicillin. Both are aided by J. Carroll Naish, a grizzly physician; Abner Biberman, a Eurasian handyman, who was a secret enemy agent; and a handful of friendly natives. Neal, impatient to fight with guns instead of with test tubes, is pleased when Ann Savage arrives on the island to replace him. He decides to remain, however, when Bridges is mysteriously murdered while investigating the loss of three jars of penicillin mold. Realizing that some one on the island sought to obtain the formula for penicillin, Neal destroys the only existing copy of the formula and, frankly telling his co-workers that he suspected each of them, announces that he alone knows the formula from memory. Later, Robert Williams, a shipwrecked sailor, is rescued by the natives and brought to the camp. In the course of events, Ann and Neal catch Biberman signalling to a Jap two-man submarine off shore. Neal manages to capture Biberman and the two Japs, only to be confronted by Williams, who reveals himself as a Nazi U-Boat commander. As Williams

tortures Neal in an attempt to extract the formula from him, Naish enters and offers the information; he gives the Nazi a fake formula. Neal, in an unguarded moment, escapes. Later, he meets Ann and learns that Williams' U-Boat was coming in to refuel from a submerged oil tank in the middle of the bay. Neal swims out to the tank and cleverly rigs a hand grenade to the fuel line. After a series of heroics, in which Neal and Naish rescue Ann from the anchored U-Boat, the Nazi submarine is blown up when a sailor attempts to connect the fuel line.

Griffin Jay and Leslie T. White wrote the screen play, Jack Fier produced it, and Lew Landers directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Going My Way" with Bing Crosby, Rise Stevens and Barry Fitzgerald

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 127 min.)

Great entertainment for all types of audiences; it has deep human appeal, delightful comedy, and pathos. In presenting the story of a modern young priest who is sent to an impoverished church to straighten out its financial difficulties, the producer has endowed it with a warmth and simplicity that will appeal to the masses. Although Bing Crosby has done good work in almost every one of the pictures he has so far appeared in, his work in this picture is without question the best in his career. As the progressive, music-loving young priest, he wins the spectator's sympathy by his kindly, unobtrusive manner, and by his deep understanding of those whom he aids. Equally as good is the performance of Barry Fitzgerald, as the cantankerous but kindly old priest, whose difficulties Crosby solves. The closing sequence has a great emotional appeal; there, Fitzgerald and his ninety-year-old mother, whom he had not seen for many years, are brought together by Crosby. This sequence is so touching that one finds it difficult to hold back the tears. Rise Stevens, famed opera contralto, sings several numbers pleasantly. Her acting, however, is undistinguished. Crosby, too, sings a few songs:—

Assigned to a financially unstable church as curate to Barry Fitzgerald, who founded and built the church many years previously, Bing Crosby does not reveal that the Bishop had sent him to replace Fitzgerald, and leads the old priest to believe that he was still in charge. Fitzgerald, at first disturbed by Crosby's modern ways and progressive methods, soon becomes devoted to the young man. Crosby helps to eliminate juvenile delinquency in the neighborhood by organizing the tough boys into a choir. When a neighborhood gossip complains that Jean Heather, a flighty eighteen-year-old girl, was acting in an indiscreet manner with James Brown, whose father (Gene Lockhart) held the mortgage on the church, Crosby takes an interest in the young couple and eventually leads them to the altar. Aided by Rise Stevens, an opera star, and Frank McHugh, a young priest from a parish nearby, both former schoolmates, Crosby secretly sells one of his songs to help pay off the church's debts. He arranges for the money to be donated during Sunday services, leading Fitzgerald to believe that he still retained his oratorical power. Fitzgerald, his mind free from financial worries, contemplates a trip to Ireland to visit his ninety-year-old mother, whom he had not seen for many years. His plans are upset, however, when the church burns down, and his health fails because of the disaster. But his strength returns when Crosby, aided by Miss Stevens, who takes the choir on tour, raises funds for the rebuilding of the church. Fitzgerald's happiness is dampened, however, when he learns that the Bishop had assigned Crosby to another poverty-stricken parish to help rehabilitate it. At a touching farewell church service, Crosby, as he departs, brings overwhelming joy to Fitzgerald by leading his aged mother to him.

Frank Butler and Frank Cavett wrote the screen play, and Leo McCarey produced and directed it. The cast includes Eily Malyon, Stanley Clemens and others.

"You Can't Ration Love" with Betty Rhodes and Johnny Johnston

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 77 min.)

A pretty entertaining program comedy, with music, suitable for the family trade. The story, though thin, is an amusing satire on rationing, offering comedy, music, dancing, and romance of the type to appeal to most picture-goers. Most of the picture's entertaining quality is due to the sprightly performances of the cast. Betty Rhodes and Johnny Johnston make a good romantic team, and both sing very well. It is a fast-moving film, with enough humorous situations to keep audiences chuckling throughout. The musical numbers are tuneful:—

Because so many of the male students had gone to war, the girls of Adams College institute a date-rationing plan for the remaining men on the campus, giving each man a point value commensurate with his attractiveness. Prize catch of the campus was Bill Edwards, who had a thirty point value. Betty Rhodes, his girl-friend, suspected that Marjorie Weaver, a campus leader, had planned the rationing movement to snare Edwards away from her. To thwart Marjorie, Betty gets hold of Johnny Johnston, a studious young man, whose two point value was the lowest on the campus, and plans to remodel him from head to toe to raise his point value; by selling her dates with Johnston, Betty hoped to secure enough extra points to have continuous dates with Edwards. Her plan backfires, however, when she falls in love with Johnston and, much to her dismay, he becomes the most sought after man on the campus. Johnston, learning of Betty's original intentions, refuses to speak to her. To dissuade the girls from chasing after him, Betty slyly hints that she and Johnston had been married secretly, and that she was going to have a baby. Marjorie, becoming sympathetic, persuades the other girls to avoid Johnston. Learning of Betty's statement, and angry because the students believed her, Johnston decides to leave school. The girls, however, forcibly stop him from deserting his "bride." Meanwhile Marjorie, suspicious, confronts Betty with the local justice of the peace, by whom Betty had supposedly been married. When Betty confesses the hoax, the girls start chasing Johnston once again. To save himself from the man-hungry co-eds, Johnston arranges with the justice of the peace to perform an immediate ceremony for Betty and himself.

Val Burton and Hal Fimberg wrote the screen play, Michael Kraike produced it, and Lester Fuller directed it. The cast includes Marie Wilson, Johnny "Scat" Davis and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Hour Before the Dawn" with Franchot Tone and Veronica Lake

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 73 min.)

A fairly interesting drama, with a spy angle, but no better than program fare. It may do better than average business because of the leading players' marquee value. The story, which is based on W. Somerset Maugham's novel, revolves around the transformation of a young British aristocrat from a conscientious objector to an R.A.F. pilot when he learns that his refugee wife was a Nazi agent. The story unfolds in so obvious a manner that it lacks the element of surprise. Moreover, the action for the most part is slow. While the work of the supporting cast is commendable, not much can be said for the performances of the leading players:—

Franchot Tone abhors guns and killings, because, as a youth, he had accidentally shot and killed his dog. He declines to go hunting with Henry Stephenson, his father, who was a retired general, and John Sutton, his brother, a flight commander in the R.A.F. Binnie Barnes, Sutton's wife, tries to encourage Tone's marriage to Veronica Lake, an Austrian refugee, who was governess to her young son. Tone loved

Veronica, but she hesitated to marry him. Actually, she was a secret Nazi agent. With the outbreak of war, Tone, a pacifist, declares himself a conscientious objector. He is deferred from service and ordered to find employment on a farm. Veronica's plan to guide the Luftwaffe to a secret airfield nearby is thwarted when an order is issued calling for the evacuation of all aliens from the area. She averts the evacuation by marrying Tone, and goes to live with him in a cottage near the airfield. Meanwhile Nils Asther, one of Veronica's confederates, poses as a Dutch pacifist and tries to involve Tone in a scheme for a negotiated peace. Tone's suspicions are aroused when several incidents indicate that Veronica was associated with Asther. She manages to allay his suspicions, however, and makes immediate plans to carry out her mission and to escape. While Tone is away late one night, she sets fire to a haystack to guide the Luftwaffe to the airfield. Binnie's young son, having seen Veronica set the fire, rushes to Tone with the news. Tone makes his way through the air raid to the cottage, and finds Veronica about to leave. She threatens to shoot him. Realizing that killing is sometimes necessary, Tone strangles her. His pacifist views abandoned, Tone joins the R.A.F.

Michael Hogan wrote the screen play, William Dozier produced it, and Frank Tuttle directed it. The cast includes Philip Merivale, David Leland and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Navy Way" with Robert Lowery, Jean Parker and Bill Henry

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 74 min.)

Just a mildly entertaining program service melodrama. The story is trite, the action slow, and the dialogue stilted. Although it has a naval background, it does not go in for war action, but centers instead on the activities of a group of recruits, who are taught the spirit of the Navy while training at the Great Lakes Naval Station. Since there is nothing unusual about the story, or its depiction of naval training methods, one's attention lags considerably. A romance has been worked into the plot:—

Bitter because his induction had interfered with his chance at the championship title, as well as with the chance of helping his poor parents, Robert Lowery, a prizefighter, gets off to a bad start with Chief Petty Officer Robert Armstrong. His arrogance and cockiness make him unpopular with his mates, but they soon learn to understand him and help him to attain graduation. Meanwhile Lowery had fallen in love with Jean Parker, a WAVE. Given leave before starting boot training, Lowery and his mates celebrate at the Chicago home of Bill Henry, a wealthy young man, who was a member of Lowery's company. All agree to meet again at Henry's home the day before they go back to the station at the end of their leave. While Lowery is away visiting his parents, Henry escorts Jean about Chicago. Both fall in love. When Lowery returns to Henry's home for the reunion, he discovers Jean and Henry in an embrace. Embittered, he refuses to listen to their explanation and heads for a saloon, which was out of bounds. Henry hurries after Lowery to stop him from going AWOL. Lowery, drunk, starts a fight with Henry, and both are arrested by a shore patrol. Both are brought before the commandant on charges, but Lowery absolves Henry of any blame. The captain informs Lowery that his offense is punishable by dishonorable discharge and takes his case under advisement. Lowery's parents, called by Henry, come to the station to plead with the commandant for leniency. Meanwhile Lowery, seeing the error of his ways, bares his heart to Chaplain Joseph Grehan. The commandant, convinced that Lowery had learned what the Navy meant, allows him to rejoin his company.

Maxwell Shane wrote the screen play, and William Pine and William Thomas produced it. William Berke directed it. The cast includes Roscoe Karns, Mary Treen and others.

Morally suitable for all.

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Heads I Win—Tails You Lose

For twenty-five years I have been making my living putting words together to express thoughts; for this reason I ought to be able in some measure to understand what a fellow may say with words. But I'll be darned if I can make out what the following means: it is Clause "A" in the new Columbia contract:

"There are licensed for exhibition hereunder all of the sound photoplays of feature length (exclusive of the so-called Western group of photoplays hereinafter referred to and exclusive of any productions, (not exceeding however four productions) to be selected and designated by Distributor, which are generally licensed in accordance with Distributor's general sales policy separate and apart from licenses embracing Distributor's Special Feature Attractions hereinafter referred to) or such or so many of them as may be specified hereunder under the heading 'Special Feature Attractions,' embraced in the Distributor's group of pictures to be known as 'H-4,' not less than thirty (30) and not more than forty-four (44), which shall be generally released by the Distributor for distribution to motion picture theatres in the United States during the period commencing September 1, 1944, and ending September 30, 1945, and embraced in said 'H-4' (except such photoplays as Distributor is required by contract to obtain the consent or approval of the producer or director thereof or other party to the terms and conditions of licensing the exhibition thereof) and identified by designation numbers running from 6001 to 6044. . . ."

Are you confused by the parenthesis within a parenthesis? You shouldn't be, for the whole clause is one grand confusion of thought. It is evident that the persons who drafted it, either were confused, or set out to confuse their company's exhibitor customers so that the home office might be able to twist the meaning for its own benefit.

After the first hour of studying the clause, I thought it meant the following:

1. Columbia licenses to the exhibitor all its 1944-45 pictures.

2. From these pictures it excludes its Westerns and any features (not exceeding four) that it would pull out and make specials out of them. These (four or fewer) excluded features, Columbia intends to license in accordance with its general sales policy of selecting certain pictures to be sold "separate and apart from licenses embracing Distributor's Special Feature Attractions" referred to in the contract. Excluded from the contract are also pictures that are classified as "Special Feature Attractions," which are designated in the contract as "Group H-4," not fewer than thirty and not more than forty-four, bearing numbers running from 6001 to 6044, to be released between September 1, 1944 and September 30, 1945.

Despite the "parsing" of the clause, however, I could not for the life of me determine whether the pictures of the "H-4" group, by which the "Special Feature Attractions" (numbered beginning with the number 6001) are designated, are part of the regular 1944-45 program or an addition to it. I presume that they are the 1944-45 pictures. But this is only a guess; I cannot make it out from the text.

After struggling with the clause for another hour, I seemed to make out a different meaning:

1. Columbia licenses to the exhibitor all its 1944-45 feature-length pictures. These will be the pictures that Columbia will release generally during the period beginning September 1, 1944 and ending September 30, 1945, bearing the numbers 6001 to 6044. They are listed, by number, in the schedule as "Special Feature Attractions," and are designated as "Group H-4."

If the exhibitor, instead of buying the forty-four pictures, should buy only (for example) twenty, it is assumed that they will be specified in the schedule as beginning with the number 6001 and ending with the number 6020, although the clause doesn't say so.

2. From the features specified in the schedule of "Special Feature Attractions," Columbia reserves the right to pull out a maximum of four pictures and to sell them as specials, separately—apart from the regular contract.

In regards to those who may buy only twenty pictures of the "H-4" group, the question now is: when Columbia pulls out four pictures, will it deliver to such contract-holder only sixteen pictures, or will it deliver twenty, replacing those that it has pulled out with four other pictures? And, will the replacements be the pictures numbered 6021, 6022, 6023, 6024, or will Columbia use as replacements any four pictures it may choose at any time during the life of the contract?

With regard to those who will buy the entire program consisting of a maximum of forty-four pictures, will Columbia give them only forty pictures, or will it produce and deliver to its customers four extra pictures so as to keep the total number intact?

Columbia, is acting like the "wise" farmer who sells you a box of apples and tells you that he is going to choose out of the box a number of the best apples to sell them for more money, but he does not offer to reduce the price of the remaining poor apples.

But no matter which way you interpret the aforementioned clause, you only guess what it means—you are never sure.

* * *

Is there any necessity for confusion? Not unless a company wants to create confusion; there are so many words in the English dictionary that no writer can find it difficult to express his thoughts on paper, particularly when dealing in the sale of commodities.

If you should decide to buy Columbia's 1944-45 pictures, regulars, specials or otherwise, insist that the home office interpret this clause for you. There will be less misunderstanding between you and Columbia if they should go to the necessary trouble of making clear your rights in the contract.

* * *

When I wrote, "If you should decide to buy Columbia's 1944-45 pictures," I was reminded of a piece of information pertinent to this matter, I was informed that recently an exhibitor organization held a membership meeting at which more than one hundred and fifty theatres were represented. The Chairman asked those present: "How many of you
(Continued on last page)"

**"Shine on Harvest Moon" with
Ann Sheridan and Dennis Morgan**
(Warner Bros., April 8; time, 112 min.)

Based on the life and career of Nora Bayes, this is a fair romantic drama with music. The individual performances are good, but the story, even if it follows Miss Bayes' career faithfully, has been done many times and presents nothing novel. Moreover, the action lags considerably in spots. In contrast with most musicals, however, it has human interest, awakened by the affection between Ann Sheridan and Dennis Morgan, and by their efforts to help each other. Miss Sheridan, as Nora Bayes, does well; her singing voice has a sympathetic, throaty quality, which is reminiscent of Miss Bayes' voice. The action takes place during 1906, and a number of the songs are the popular tunes of that era. The finish is a lavish production number, in Technicolor, of "Shine on Harvest Moon," the song Miss Bayes immortalized. S. Z. Sakall, as a blustering vaudeville booker, and Jack Carson, as a magician, provoke some laughs by their antics, but for the most part the film lacks a good comedy punch:—

Jack Norworth (Dennis Morgan), song writer and vaudeville star, goes to a dance palace to hear Nora Bayes, an unknown, sing one of his songs. Impressed by her voice, Norworth offers to help get her into vaudeville. Because of his attentions, she is fired by Don Costello (Robert Shayne), owner of the place. With the aide of Georgetti (Jack Carson), a magician, and Margie (Marie Wilson), his assistant, Norworth persuades a theatre manager to give Nora a trial. Costello, however, arranges for his henchmen to boo her off the stage. Norworth arranges for Nora to team up with Blanche Mallory (Irene Manning) in a sister act, but on opening night, Irene, jealous of Norworth's attentions to Nora, quits in a huff. Norworth himself teams up with Nora, and marries her. They gain fame as a vaudeville team and are on the verge of signing a big contract when Costello, now head of a powerful theatre chain, sees that they are blacklisted at every theatre. Despite their disappointments, Norworth and Nora remain devoted to each other. Norworth interests a music publisher in one of his songs, but the purchase of the song hinges upon approval by Blanche, now a top vaudeville star, who demands that Norworth leave Nora and team up with her. Norworth declines. Nora learns of the incident through Marie's chattering. She leaves him, thinking it best for his career. Heartbroken, Norworth accepts work in cheap burlesque houses. Poppa Karl (S. Z. Sakall), a mutual friend, determines to bring the pair together again. He locates Nora in Atlantic City plugging songs in a dime store, and brings her to New York to attend one of Norworth's performances. Seeing her sitting in a box, Norworth invites her to sing with him. A talent scout, impressed with their singing, signs them for the Ziegfeld Follies.

Sam Hellman, Richard Weil, Francis Swann, and James Kern wrote the screen play. William Jacobs produced it, and David Butler directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

**"Hot Rhythm" with Robert Lowery,
Irene Ryan and Tim Ryan**
(Monogram, April 7; time, 79 min.)

A typical program comedy with popular music, which should get by in theatres that cater to the followers of this type of entertainment. The story is somewhat inane, and most of the comedy is ineffective because it is forced, but the action moves along at a fast pace and it manages to be fairly amusing. Irene Ryan, as a scatter-brain secretary, provokes most of the laughs, making more of the material than what it really offers. The music is tuneful:—

Robert Lowery and Sidney Miller, song writers for a recording company owned by Tim Ryan, meet Donna Drake, a singer, who wanted to become a soloist with a band. To put her over, the boys, using a recording of Jerry Cooper's orchestra, trick Donna into making a record, synchronizing her voice with Cooper's music. Through an error, thousands of pressings are made of the record, which is distributed by Ryan's company. Ryan is compelled to buy back the records from the dealers when Robert Kent, Cooper's manager, threatens to sue him. Meanwhile Cooper, intrigued by the girl's voice, instructs Kent to find her and sign her to a contract. No one, however, knew Donna's identity, for Lowery and Miller had kept it a secret, lest Ryan learn that they were responsible for the mix-up. Through a misunderstanding Kent, believing that Irene Ryan, Ryan's secretary, is the mystery singer, signs her to a contract. Ryan eventually learns that Lowery and Miller were responsible for his troubles; he discharges them. The boys, however, get new jobs, and succeed in obtaining a contract for Donna with Cooper's band. Kent finds himself with Irene under contract, but doesn't realize that she, too, is a singing sensation. Knowing Irene's true value, Ryan buys her contract from Kent, on the condition that he drop the law suit against him.

Tim Ryan and Charles Marion wrote the screen play, Lindsley Parsons produced it, and William Beaudine directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

**"Hi, Good Lookin' " with Harriet Hilliard,
Kirby Grant and Eddie Quillan**
(Universal, March 24; time, 62 min.)

A moderately amusing program comedy with music, suitable as a supporting feature in spots where comedy relief is needed to round out a double-bill. The story is thin and quite far-fetched, but it has enough comedy situations and laughs to satisfy those who are not too discriminating. The action is not exciting, but it is breezy and moves along at a steady pace. The music, which is of the popular variety, is sung pleasantly by Harriet Hilliard and Kirby Grant:—

Harriet Hilliard arrives in Hollywood to meet Eddie Quillan, who had led her to believe that he was a radio executive, and that he would put her on the air as a singer. She is disillusioned and peeved to find that Quillan is no more than a guide at the studios. Through an exchange of suitcases in a hotel lobby, Harriet makes the acquaintance of Kirby Grant, a famous radio singer, who falls in love with her immediately. Quillan, sensing an opportunity, informs Grant of Harriet's singing ambitions and induces him to arrange for her to be given a trial on an all-night broadcast. Fuzzy Knight, owner of the radio station, insists that Grant sing with Harriet, but agrees to keep his identity a secret. Grant's singing with Harriet creates a sensation, but his own program suffers because of his lack of sleep. Grant's sponsors decide to discharge him and to hire Harriet and her mystery tenor. The sponsors contact Quillan, who, unaware that they were Grant's employers, arranges for them to meet Harriet and her unknown partner at a night-club. There Grant, without revealing that he was Harriet's partner, learns that his sponsors sought to oust him. Milburn Stone, a columnist, attempts to expose Grant as the mystery singer, but Grant prevents him from doing so by starting a fight. The sponsors discharge Grant and agree to try Harriet for one broadcast. On the night of her debut, Grant reveals himself as the mystery tenor. The broadcast is a huge success, and the sponsors sign the young couple to a lengthy contract.

Frank Gross produced it, and Edward Lilley directed it. The cast includes Roscoe Karns, Betty Kean and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The White Cliffs" with Irene Dunne, Alan Marshal and Roddy McDowall

(MGM, no release date set; time, 127 min.)

Combining romance, light comedy, and tragedy, this is a strong human interest drama, with a particular appeal for women, because the story, which deals with the anguish suffered by a wife and mother in war-time, reflects the heart-aches most of them are undergoing in these days. The production, direction, and acting are of the highest order. And the personal charm and popularity of Irene Dunne should, in itself, bring patrons to the box-office. Miss Dunne wins the spectator's sympathy at the very beginning and retains it throughout. One feels deeply the tragedy that befalls her when her husband loses his life in the first World War, shortly after their marriage, and when her son meets a similar fate in the present conflict. While there are many situations that will draw tears, the action is by no means all tragic. There is a delightful romance between Miss Dunne and Alan Marshal, and a number of amusing situations handled capably by both Frank Morgan and C. Aubrey Smith. Roddy McDowall, as Miss Dunne's son, as a boy, is very appealing:—

Irene Dunne, an American girl, visits England with her father (Frank Morgan), a small-town newspaper publisher, prior to World War I. There she falls in love with Alan Marshal, a young nobleman, and marries him after a whirlwind courtship. Their honeymoon is interrupted when war is declared and Marshal leaves for France. Both manage to see each other in Dieppe during one of Marshal's furloughs. On Armistice Day, Irene receives word of Marshal's death. She decides to remain in England to rear her son, whom Marshal had never seen. Years later, Irene's father, fearing a new war, urges her to return to America with her boy (Roddy McDowall). When Marshal's mother (Gladys Cooper) dies, and Irene finds Roddy and herself alone on the estate, she decides to accept her father's advice. But Roddy, reminding her that his father would have liked him to carry on the family's traditions, influences her to remain, despite her fears that he, too, may one day meet her husband's fate. The year 1942 finds Irene, a Red Cross Commandant in a London hospital, anxiously awaiting the return of wounded soldiers from a raid on Dieppe. Among those brought to the hospital is her son (Peter Lawford), mortally wounded. Informed that her boy had but four hours to live, Irene comforts him in his last moments. He dies as she stands before an open window, describing to him a parade of American soldiers, the first contingent to land in England, who, like their fathers before them, had come to fight for a "peace that will stick."

Claudine West, Jan Lustig, and George Froeschel wrote the screen play, based on the poem by Alice Duer Miller. Sidney Franklin produced it, and Clarence Brown directed it. The cast includes Van Johnson, Dame Mae Whitty, John Warburton and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Hat Check Honey" with Grace McDonald and Richard Davis

(Universal, March 10; time, 69 min.)

A pleasing program picture, even though the story is formula, revolving around a hero who gets a swell head because of success, eventually coming to his senses. Both Richard Davis and Grace McDonald having pleasing personalities. The part played by Leon Errol, who is presented as an ill mannered vaudevillian, is highly exaggerated and unbelievable, but his antics should provoke laughter, particularly in crowded houses. Freddy Slack and his orchestra, Ted Weems and his orchestra, and Harry Owens and his Royal Hawaiians, contribute considerably to the entertainment values. The photography is pleasing to the eye:—

Richard Davis, son of Leon Errol, pushed out of their act by his father, who felt that he was a drag on his son,

obtains a minor job in a swanky nightclub and, through the efforts of Grace McDonald, hat-check girl, who had taken an interest in him, he gains recognition as a singer. In time, Richard has his own band. Ramsay Ames, a popular movie actress, becomes attracted to him, and Richard eventually lands in Hollywood, engaged to play opposite Ramsay. Leon sends West Grace, who loved Richard; she also had literary ambitions. When she reaches the studio, a high-pressure producer gives her a job as a messenger girl. Leon comes West, bringing along his bad manners of loud talking and acting rowdy. Walter Catlett, Richard's high-pressure manager, makes Richard understand that his father's presence does him no good. Success goes to Richard's head. Eventually he becomes so muddled that he breaks his contract and returns East. Grace writes a story, which Milburn Stone, the producer, accepts, but Grace refuses to sell it unless Richard and Leon appear in it. This brings father and son West. Richard, now sobered up, realizes how much Grace meant to him.

Maurice Leo and Stanley Davis wrote the screen play, Will Cowan produced it, and Edward F. Cline directed it.

Not harmful to children.

"Cover Girl" with Rita Hayworth and Gene Kelly

(Columbia, April 6; time, 107 min.)

This musical should please the masses pretty well. Photographed in Technicolor, the settings are lavish and the music and dance routines good. The story, however, is of the typical backstage variety, following a formula; it has not been given any novel twists. Before the first half is over, one knows just what is going to happen. But if the spectators overlook the triteness of the plot, they should find many entertaining features—tuneful music, bright comedy, romance, and excellent dancing by Rita Hayworth and Gene Kelly. The sequence in which Kelly dances with what might be called his "sub-conscious self," is a superb dance routine and a most ingenious bit of trick photography. Rita Hayworth gives a vibrant performance, scoring in each of the numbers she appears, whether it be singing or dancing. Phil Silvers and Eve Arden do well with the comedy:—

Rita Hayworth, chorus girl in a nondescript Brooklyn night-club operated by Gene Kelly, her sweetheart, enters a "Cover Girl" contest sponsored by a national magazine. Otto Kruger, the publisher, takes an interest in Rita, because she was the image of a girl with whom he had been in love years previously. Later, he learns that Rita was the grand-daughter of that woman. Under Kruger's guidance, Rita becomes famous nationally, but takes her success in level-headed fashion, not allowing it to interfere with her love for Kelly. When Lee Bowman, a Broadway producer, importunes Rita to leave Kelly's night-club and to become his new star, Kelly, refusing to stand in the way of her future, deliberately breaks with Rita. Bewildered and hurt, Rita leaves him angrily and goes to Bowman. Despite her continued success and numerous marriage proposals from Bowman, Rita retains her love for Kelly. She returns to Brooklyn after many months, only to find the night-club closed and Kelly gone. Miserable and disappointed at Kelly's disappearance, she agrees to marry Bowman. News of her pending marriage depresses Kelly. Realizing that Rita and Kelly loved each other deeply, Phil Silvers, a mutual friend, visits Kruger and asks him to intercede. On the day of the wedding, as Rita begins the processional on the arm of Kruger, the publisher induces her to leave Bowman at the altar and to return to Kelly.

Virginia Van Upp wrote the screen play, Arthur Schwartz produced it, and Charles Vidor directed it. Jerome Kern wrote the music and Ira Gershwin the lyrics. The cast includes Jinx Falkenburg, Leslie Brooks, Jess Barker, Ed Brophy and others.

Morally suitable for all.

bought Columbia's 1942-43 pictures?" All but two raised their hands. When they were asked: "How many of you bought the 1943-44 pictures of this company?" only two exhibitors raised their hands. One of them stated that he had made his contract in June and had no way of getting out of it; the other, that pictures were so scarce in his locality that he had to have this company's product.

In publicizing its annual sales drive, which has been labeled "Dates To Win," Columbia is stressing the close relationship that exists between the exhibitors and its sales organization. The aforementioned incident should give you a pretty good idea of just how deep is really that relationship.

What Columbia should really do is to have a sales drive labeled "A Square Deal for the Exhibitor," supported by a new policy under which the exhibitor actually gets a square deal. This would bring about a closer relationship between the distributor and its customers than all the words and mouthings and parentheses that Columbia has used in the past three years.

AN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT "THE SONG OF BERNADETTE"

This office has received the following letter from a prominent Allied leader:

"I have a question which you might develop editorially for the benefit of your subscribers and the prestige of HARRISON'S REPORTS, if it appeals to you.

"I do not know, and have no means of ascertaining here, the exact conditions of the Academy awards. However, I had supposed that the only pictures or performances eligible for the competition were pictures or performances in pictures that had been released.

"It seems to me to be very strange that an award should be made for a picture or a performance which the public has never had the opportunity to see.

"Looking at the release chart in the current (March 4) issue of *Motion Picture Herald* (the only paper immediately at hand) I find that 'The Song of Bernadette' not only has not been released but that the release date has not been set.

"The wildest rumors are current as to the terms which 20th Century-Fox will demand for the picture; some to the effect that the company will demand the same terms that Metro demanded for 'Gone With the Wind,' or Paramount demanded for 'For Whom the Bell Tolls.'

"If the rules have been changed or by-passed for this picture, that fact should be exposed. If the picture was eligible under the rules, then the rules are subject to criticism.

"It seems to me that the Academy award for a picture or a performance (in this case the performance of Jennifer Jones) should not be given prior to general release and the announcement of terms. Even though the voting may have been conducted without regard to commercial considerations, still the exhibitors and the public are going to suspect that the purpose was to lay the foundation for demanding exorbitant terms and piling up enormous profits.

"I very much hope you will see fit to go into this matter."

The conditions under which a picture may be entered for the Academy Award, given to the outstanding picture of the year at the meeting held in Hollywood late in February or early in March, are that it be exhibited in the Los Angeles district prior to January 1.

Awards are made also for the following: (1) Best performances by a leading actor; (2) best performance by a leading actress; (3) best performance by a supporting actor; (4) best performance by a supporting actress; (5) best direction; (6) best screen play; (7) best original screen play; (8) best original story, written specially for the screen; (9) best art direction; (10) best photography; (11) best sound recording; (12) best film editing; (13) best special effects; (14) best short subjects of 1000 feet, 3000 feet, and cartoons; (15) best scoring of (a) musical picture, (b) dramatic picture, (c) comedy picture, (d) original song written for the screen.

In view of the fact that the voting is done only by studio personnel, neither a picture's national release date, nor its performance at the box-office, is taken into consideration when the awards are made, in accordance with the rules of the Academy. These rules are made by the members of the Academy, and may be changed only by its membership. Nominations are made by the Class "A" members of the different guilds.

The awards given to Paul Lukas, Jennifer Jones, Charles Coburn and Katina Paxinou, so far as acting is concerned, seem to have won the approval of every critic as justifiable, but much politics is played by the studios, which prize these awards highly. In former years there were complaints that the selections were the result of high pressure, and even of deals.

This paper cannot ascertain whether Twentieth Century-Fox will use the fact of Jennifer Jones' award to demand of the exhibitors higher rentals. It can, however, and does recommend to the Academy that the rules be changed so that the only pictures eligible for awards be those pictures in general release at least thirty days before the end of the year.

WHAT IS THE PICTURE INDUSTRY DOING FOR ITSELF?

Greta Palmer went to Hollywood with the idea of writing a story for *Liberty* magazine, panning the daylighters out of Hollywood, but came away with a different impression; and in the February 19 issue she wrote a story that presented Hollywood as it is—hard-working, level-headed, spending money lavishly but not unwisely, and with one thought in mind, to make pictures that will be a credit to it, as well as to the entire nation.

"Hollywood," Miss Palmer said, "hasn't the faintest appreciation of its own value." She closes her article as follows: "Ladies and Gentlemen! Hollywood is colossal. Colossal? Hell, it's good!"

Another writer, Bosley Crowther, of the *New York Times*, has written expressing a real appreciation of what the industry is doing for the American public. In the Sunday, March 5, issue, he said partly:

"Probably you haven't stopped to notice . . . how much motion pictures have come along in the past couple of years as a means of communication between the public and those who have thoughts to transmit. . . .

"With the war and the sense of the peril . . . , the screen has emerged as a real and effective medium for the spreading of pertinent facts. Government information services (not only of our own but those of other nations as well,) the military forces, institutions—all have aimed to reach the masses through the screen. . . . As a consequence, the motion picture industry, which is essentially a commercial enterprise, has been moved to accept a relation to the public which it but vaguely acknowledged in the past—that of a public service charged with an educational job. . . ."

At the recent trade-press interview of Nate Blumberg, president of Universal, I asked Mr. Blumberg why the industry has not resorted to institutional advertising to keep the public informed of the services the picture industry has rendered and is rendering, not only to the public, but also to the nation, and I was encouraged by him. He stated that the present feeling of the industry's leaders is to resort to institutional advertising.

When I read the well-written, beautifully illustrated advertisements that are inserted in newspapers, magazines and other media by the different industries, such as the motor industry, the oil industry, the aeroplane industry, which expect no profits from the public right now on account of the fact that they cannot deliver to it any of their products, I feel keenly the lack of advertising designed to win the good will of the public for our industry. The motion picture industry has rendered as great a service to the nation as any of the other industries. And yet the other industries are spending money to gain the public's good will whereas our industry has gone to sleep.

There is still time; let's wake up!

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PARAMOUNT'S JUGGLING

Neil Agnew, general sales manager of Paramount, has just announced that "Going My Way," with Bing Crosby, originally scheduled for release in this season's fourth block, has been withdrawn and will be released later in the season.

The reason for this withdrawal is given as "the tremendous success" "Lady in the Dark," "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek," "The Uninvited Guest," and "Standing Room Only" have made, getting a "large number of play-dates and extended playing time."

Mr. Agnew announced also that "The Hitler Gang" is scheduled for release. Although he did not say when he will release it, I have been informed that it will be included in the fourth block.

This is not the first time that Paramount announced a picture in one block and later withdrew it. They did so with a picture in the second block—"The Miracle of Morgan's Creek." They sent out engraved invitations in this area informing the trade that the picture would be shown at the Normandie Theatre and, just before the picture went on, a Paramount employee appeared on the stage and announced to those present, reviewers as well as exhibitors, that they would show "Riding High," which was part of the second block, instead of "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek." He gave as a reason the fact that the picture was sent back to Hollywood for re-editing and for shooting new scenes.

One month afterwards, the picture was tradeshowed in England. This indicates that "re-editing" and "shooting new scenes" were not the reasons for the withdrawal, for if those were the reasons it would have taken at least six months before the picture could have been tradeshowed in that country.

The other pictures of the fourth block are "You Can't Ration Love," with Betty Rhodes and Johnny Johnston; "The Navy Way" with Robert Lowery and Jean Parker; and "The Hour Before the Dawn" with Franchot Tone and Veronica Lake. All these are of program grade, so far as the quality goes, even though the third picture has two popular stars. The picture Paramount now intends to put in the place of the Bing Crosby picture is "The Hitler Gang," with Bobby Watson and Martin Kosleck.

In view of the fact that this picture has not yet been tradeshowed, I cannot say how good or bad it is, but the star values are nil.

Perhaps Paramount is entitled to make these changes legally, but I doubt whether it is entitled to do so on moral grounds.

That the juggling of pictures in the manner of Paramount is considered by the exhibitors as an abuse

may be evidenced by the fact that, among the recommendations made to the Department of Justice by the independent exhibitors' conference, held in Chicago on January 31 and February 1, was the following recommendation:

"(Announced groups. The conference recommends the insertion in the decree of the following in order to prevent the inequities resulting from the practice of the distributors in shifting pictures from one announced group to another, solely in their own interests:

"An announced group of features shall be the same throughout the United States and a group once announced shall not thereafter be changed; provided, that nothing herein shall prevent variations resulting from the roadshowing of a picture in one territory and not in another, or shall prevent the licensing of such lesser number of features as the distributor and exhibitor may agree upon."

ARE THE EXHIBITORS TO BE LEFT HANGING IN MID-AIR ONCE AGAIN?

The trade papers report that Tom Clark, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Government's suit against the five major companies, plans to resign soon to return to private law practice.

That is one of the chief troubles that prevent the exhibitors from knowing where they stand so far as the producer practices that have been condemned by the Department of Justice are concerned. Every one of either the Assistant Attorney Generals or of subordinates having charge of the Government's suit has resigned and left his work incomplete. This has been going on since the early days.

The same thing happened even with the Federal Trade Commission: No sooner did either a counsel or an important subordinate of the Commission familiarize himself with the details than he resigned to resume private law practice.

It seems as if all the work that Allied and other truly independent exhibitor organizations have done to obtain relief will again have been wasted.

FACTS ABOUT THE NEW TAX RATE

Pete Wood, business manager of the Independent Theatre Owners of Ohio, never lets an opportunity go by to familiarize himself with tax matters so that he may pass to the members of his organization correct tax information.

The last few bulletins issued by Wood are devoted mainly to the pending tax increase, as voted by Congress, to take effect April 1, 1944.

(Continued on last page)

"Four Jills in a Jeep" with Kay Francis, Martha Raye, Carole Landis and Mitzi Mayfair

(20th Century-Fox; March; time, 89 min.)

Good light entertainment, suitable as a top feature on a double-bill. Based on the actual experiences of Kay Francis, Carole Landis, Martha Raye, and Mitzi Mayfair, the film, in terms of fact and fiction, traces the adventures the girls had in 1942-43, during their six months' entertainment tour of army camps in England and North Africa. Although the story itself is lightweight and serves merely as a framework for the specialty numbers performed by the different players, it is a pleasant combination of music, comedy, and dancing, with a bit of romantic interest woven through the proceedings. An added attraction is the appearance of Betty Grable, Alice Faye, and Carmen Miranda as guest stars on a radio broadcast to soldiers overseas. Each sings a popular song which they have been identified with. The music of Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra should help lure the youngsters to the box-office. Mitzi Mayfair does some expert dance routines, and Martha Raye and Phil Silvers provoke numerous laughs by their clowning. The film introduces Dick Haymes, who apparently is Twentieth-Century Fox's entry in the crooner sweepstakes. His voice should please those who find that type of singing pleasurable. George Jessel is in for a brief bit as a master of ceremonies. —

Having received permission from Washington to form an entertainment unit for service overseas, Kay Francis selects Carole Landis, Mitzi Mayfair, and Martha Raye, who volunteer to go. An army bomber takes the girls to England, where they are met by Sergeant Phil Silvers, who had been assigned as liaison man to accompany the girls throughout their tour. The girls soon adapt themselves to the rigors of army life, entertaining at one camp after another. Carole falls in love with Captain John Harvey, a flier, and, after a brief courtship, marries him. Their honeymoon, however, is interrupted when the girls receive orders to leave immediately for North Africa. Their plane is forced down on the Algerian desert, and the girls are rescued by a camel patrol, which brings them to a village near the front lines. There, they volunteer as nurses to aid the wounded. Though tired at the end of the day, the girls cheerfully put on a show for the soldiers. The show is interrupted by a Nazi bombardment, which causes the girls to take cover in fox holes. The attack over, the girls prepare to visit other camps.

Robert Ellis, Helen Logan, and Snag Werris wrote the screen play, Irving Starr produced it, and William A. Seiter directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Lady and the Monster" with Eric Von Stroheim, Richard Arlen and Vera Hrubá Ralston

(Republic, no release date set; time, 87 min.)

An interesting mystery melodrama. It should prove satisfying to most audiences; the story, though fantastic and morbid, is different and holds one in suspense. In certain sequences there is a tendency to lag, but on the whole the picture has been handled and directed well. The production tone is very good, and the spectator will be gripped by its mysterious atmosphere. Eric Von Stroheim, as a diabolical, self-centered scientist, gives his usual skillful performance. Richard Arlen does well in a difficult role. —

Having invented a machine that recorded the existence of life in the brain after death, Von Stroheim and Richard Arlen, his assistant, experiment with the brains of dead animals. Both were assisted by Vera Hrubá Ralston, who remained at the weird, castle-like mansion, which was the home and laboratory of Von Stroheim, only because of her love for Arlen. When an airplane crashes nearby, killing two men, Von Stroheim decides to experiment upon a human brain, which he steals from one of the bodies. Arlen, though realizing that the experiment was unethical, devotes himself to it. Later, they learn that the brain be-

longed to a famous financier. Helen Vinson, the dead man's widow, and Sidney Blackmer, her lawyer, discover that the brain had been stolen, but say nothing in the hope that the experiment will reveal the financier's missing fortune. Having satisfied himself that the brain remained alive after death, Arlen submerges his own personality to make himself receptive to messages from the brain through mental telepathy. Gradually the brain strengthens and dominates Arlen. Under its influence, Arlen takes a trip to Los Angeles, where he becomes involved in an attempt to prove the innocence of Bill Henry, who had been convicted of murder. The brain directs Arlen to huge sums of money, which he uses to pay Blackmer to re-open Henry's case. Arlen becomes so completely dominated by the brain that he assumes the dead man's ruthless personality. Meanwhile, back at the mansion, Vera clashes with Von Stroheim after an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the brain to bring Arlen back to normalcy. After a series of events, in which Arlen almost commits two murders because of his desire to free Henry, he becomes his old self when the brain falls asleep under the influence of morphine. Arlen rushes back to the laboratory and, after a death struggle with Von Stroheim, destroys the brain and frees himself, from its domination. Later he helps prove Henry's innocence, and is himself obliged to serve a short prison term because of his part in the illegal brain experiment.

Dane Lussier and Frederick Kohner wrote the screen play, based on the novel, "Donovan's Brain," by Curt Siodmak. George Sherman produced and directed it. The cast includes Mary Nash, Juanita Quigley and others.

Too morbid for children.

"The Chinese Cat" with Sidney Toler

(Monogram, May 20; time, 66 min.)

As the second in Monogram's series of "Charlie Chan" murder-mystery melodramas, this shapes up as a suitable supporting feature for small-town and neighborhood theatres. The story, which is filled with implausibilities, follows a usual pattern in which Sidney Toler, as the famous Chinese detective, unravels with the greatest of ease a crime that had baffled the police and, in the process, quickly disposes of the attendant complications. Like the first picture, this, too, has a fair share of comedy, the laughs being provoked by "Chan's" son and a colored chauffeur, who help him to solve the crime. —

Learning that Charlie Chan (Sidney Toler) was in Washington on Government business, Joan Woodbury asks him to solve the murder of her father, who had been killed six months previously. Chan agrees to enter the case. Aided by Benson Fong, his son, and Manton Moreland, a colored taxicab driver, Chan learns that Joan was in love with Weldon Heyburn, a young detective, who had been demoted because of his inability to solve her father's murder. Chan ferrets out the different clues and discovers that Joan's father had been dealing with a gang of jewel smugglers, and that Cy Kendall, his partner, was involved in the deals. Additional clues lead Chan to a funhouse on an abandoned amusement pier, where the gang had its hideout. On the last evening of his stay in Washington, Chan leaves a message for Joan that he was going to the funhouse with his son and Moreland. There he finds Kendall murdered, and also encounters the members of the gang. Knowing that Chan had found a huge uncut diamond among the personal effects of Joan's father, the gang captures Chan and his son and tries to force them into revealing where the diamond is. With the inadvertent assistance of Moreland, however, they manage to escape and hide in the caverns of the funhouse. Meanwhile Joan, alarmed at Chan's failure to return from the funhouse, notifies the police. They arrive in time to save Chan and apprehend the gang. Chan proves that Joan's father had been killed by Kendall, who had in turn been killed by the gang.

George Callahan wrote the screen play, Philip N. Krasne and James S. Burkitt produced it, and Phil Rosen directed it. Morally suitable for all.

"My Best Gal" with Jane Withers and Jimmy Lydon

(*Republic, March 28; time, 67 min.*)

A routine program musical entertainment, the sort that should appeal mainly to the younger set. Most of the action revolves around a group of talented adolescents who break into song and dance at the slightest provocation. The story follows a cut-and-dried formula, and little imagination has been used in its presentation. It has, however, enough youthful romance, light comedy, and tuneful music to satisfy as a supporting feature on a mid-week double bill: —

Together with Frank Craven, her grandfather, who was an old vaudevillian, Jane Withers works behind a soda fountain in a drugstore, which was a gathering place for youngsters who dreamt of success on Broadway, Jimmy Lydon, a young playwright, who had written a musical show built around the youngsters, seeks to interest a producer in the play. Jane, in love with Jimmy, arranges with George Cleveland, an eccentric Broadway producer who was one of her customers, to read the play. Cleveland, whose phobia was astrology and who guided his business by the stars, likes the script and makes an appointment with Jimmy to buy it. Expecting that Cleveland will accept the youngsters along with the play, Jimmy and Jane, aided by Craven, put the kids through an all-night rehearsal so that they will be at their best when Cleveland auditions them. The rehearsal proves a bit too strenuous for Craven, who becomes dangerously ill. The following day Cleveland offers Jimmy \$1500 for the play, but refuses to accept the youngsters as part of the deal. Jimmy, rather than disappoint his friends, refuses the offer. Later, when he learns of Craven's illness, and that the old man needs costly medical care, Jimmy accepts Cleveland's offer and secretly pays for Craven's medical needs. Jane and the youngsters, not knowing the truth, condemn Jimmy for letting them down. As Jimmy departs for army duty, they learn the truth. All rush to the station to see him off. Cleveland, having satisfied himself that the youngsters are talented, sends them on a tour of army camps.

Olive Cooper and Earl Felton wrote the screen play, Harry Grey produced it, and Anthony Mann directed it. The cast includes Franklin Pangborn, Fortunio Bonanova, Mary Newton and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Buffalo Bill" with Joel McCrea, Maureen O'Hara and Thomas Mitchell

(*20th Century-Fox, April; time, 90 min.*)

Biographical of the life of Colonel William Frederick Cody, more popularly known as "Buffalo Bill," this is a spectacular super-western melodrama, photographed in Technicolor amid scenes of pictorial beauty. It should do good business, for the fame of "Buffalo Bill" and his exploits are well known to most Americans. Although the script fails to take full advantage of the material Cody's life offered, dwelling a bit too long on the incidents concerned with his romance and marriage, it holds one's interest throughout. There is one sequence that, for breath-taking action, has not been surpassed in pictures for a long time. It is where Cody leads to victory U. S. Cavalry troops in a head-on battle with Cheyenne Indians at War Bonnet Gorge. The fierceness of the hand-to-hand combat, and the tumbling of men from horses thrown to the ground, will thrill the spectator no end. Joel McCrea, as Cody, gives a good performance, winning one's admiration because of his courage in defending others at the risk of his own life, and also because of his ideals:—

Cody, a frontiersman, saves the lives of Senator Frederici (Moroni Olson) and of his daughter, Louisa (Maureen O'Hara) when they are attacked by drunken Indians while en route to Fort Clark. Maureen invites Cody to dinner at her home, where he meets Ned Buntline (Thomas Mitchell), a New York journalist, and Scyler Vandervere (George Lessey), a railroad magnate. He learns that the men had

come to the frontier to seek the aid of the army in compelling the Cheyenne Indians to allow Vandervere's railroad interests to extend further West. The Indians resist the attempts to oust them, and capture the Senator as hostage, in order to obtain a favorable peace. Cody, risking his life, saves the Senator and helps to conclude a satisfactory peace with the Indians. Louisa and Cody fall in love and marry. They live happily on the frontier, and a son is born to them. Soon after, when Eastern hunters come West and slaughter buffalo, the Indians, dependant on the buffalo for food and clothing, declare war on the white man. Cody volunteers as a scout for the army, despite the protests of Louisa, who leaves him and returns to Washington. After leading the army to a decisive victory over the Indians, Cody is summoned to Washington to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. He arrives there on the day his son dies of diphtheria. The boy's death widens the rift between Maureen and himself. He becomes embittered against civilization, and his outspoken assaults on Eastern methods results in a campaign aimed at discrediting him. As a result, he is branded a fraud. Penniless and despondent, he becomes an attraction in a shooting gallery. Eventually, however, he becomes reconciled with Louisa and, with the aid of Buntline, his staunch newspaperman friend, organizes his first Wild West show. In the ensuing years, he wins back success and fame.

Aeneas MacKenzie, Clements Ripley, and Cecile Kramer wrote the screen play, Harry A. Sherman produced it, and William A. Wellman directed it. The cast includes Linda Darnell, Edgar Buchanan, Anthony Quinn, Sidney Blackmer and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Jam Session" with Ann Miller and Jess Barker

(*Columbia, April 13; time, 78 min.*)

A fair program musical of its kind. As indicated by the title, it is the sort of entertainment that will appeal chiefly to the "jitter-bug" trade, for which the film has obviously been designed. The story, which treats lightly of the trials and tribulations of a small-town girl trying to make her mark in Hollywood, is of no consequence, serving merely as a respite from the blaring "swing" music of six popular orchestras headed by Charlie Barnett, Louis Armstrong, Alvino Rey, Glen Gray, Jan Garber, and Teddy Powell. In addition, there is the singing of Nan Wynn and the Pied Pipers. Ann Miller, who is a better dancer than an actress, is not given much opportunity to display her dancing talent until the picture's finale:—

Ann Miller, winner of a dance contest in a small-town, arrives in Hollywood with a letter of introduction to Charles D. Brown, head of Superba Studios. Her efforts to see Brown are unavailing, and she returns to her boarding house in a dejected frame of mind. There, she overhears Jess Barker, a writer who had been engaged by Brown, telephone the studio and request that a stenographer be assigned to him that afternoon. As Barker leaves the telephone, Ann calls the studio and cancels his request, explaining that he had found his own secretary. She arranges for a pass to be left at the gate for her. Barker, unaware of Ann's ruse, accepts her as the secretary assigned by the studio. When he starts dictating a story to her, Ann, unable to take shorthand or to type, tries to memorize everything he says. Later, she employs a public stenographer and, from memory, redictates Barker's story. When Brown reads the story, it is so badly done that he discharges Barker. Ann confesses to Barker, but the young man cannot convince Brown. After a series of incidents, in which Ann is tossed out of the studio and lands in jail, because of her attempts to square Barker with Brown, it all ends with Ann given an opportunity to dance in a picture. Barker regains his job and wins Ann.

Manny Seff wrote the screen play, Irving Briskin produced it, and Charles Barton directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

In view of the fact that, what is true of the State of Ohio in matters concerning the Federal tax, is true of every other state in the Union, it will, I believe, help every exhibitor in the country if I printed in HARRISON'S REPORTS whatever tax information is of interest to exhibitors nationally.

In his March 6 bulletin, Mr. Wood advises his members that the Ohio Tax Commission has ordered that:

"All persons and firms engaged in the use or rental, distribution or exhibition of motion picture films in Ohio preserve all books and records pertaining to such motion picture films and the use or rental thereof in Ohio since the 27th day of January, 1935." (*Editor's note: Substitute any other state for Ohio.*)

There is no tax on tickets sold to men and women in the uniform of the U. S. armed forces.

In his March 11 bulletin, Pete says that there is no way by which an exhibitor can save combined admission prices (admission price with tax) such as, 15c, 45c, 75c and the like, because on March 10, D. S. Bliss, Deputy Commissioner of Internal Revenue, of Washington, issued the following ruling:

"It is not permissible to fix admission at 13c with 3c tax, and reduce price to 15c, because the purchaser would be paying 12c for admission on which the tax is 2c."

By this, the Deputy Commissioner indicated that the exhibitor would be collecting 3c tax whereas the Government would be entitled only to 2c.

In order to make this clear to every exhibitor, HARRISON'S REPORTS takes the liberty of calling the attention to its readers to a paragraph in an editorial that was printed in its January 22 issue, on page 16, under the heading, "The Admission Tax Situation"; it reads as follows:

"On Tuesday, January 18, . . . the Senate adopted an amendment offered by Senator Walter F. George, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, in behalf of Senator Wilson, providing for the tax to be imposed at the rate of one cent on each five cents or major fraction thereof, instead of one cent on each five cents or any fraction thereof."

This amendment means that no additional tax is charged when, to the basic admission price of, for example, 5c, 10c, 15c, 20c, and so on, is added 2c. In other words, the tax on 5c, 6c, or 7c is 1c, making the combined price 6c, 7c, or 8c, as the case may be; the tax on 10c, 11c, or 12c is 2c, making the combined price 11c, 12c, or 13c, as the case may be; the tax on 15c, 16c, or 17c is 3c, making the combined price 18c, 19c, or 20c, as the case may be. Likewise the tax on 75c, 76c, or 77c admission is 15c, making the combined price 90c, 91c, or 92c, the final charge depending on whether you charge, 75c, 76c, or 77c for a basic admission price.

Deputy Commissioner Bliss says that you cannot make your basic admission price 13c, add to it 3c for the tax, and then reduce your admission price to 15c because, as already explained, when you deduct the 3c of the tax from the 15c of the combined admission price, the admission price is left at 12c, for which the tax is only 2c instead of 3c. In other words, in case you fix your admission price at 15c, the Government will

be entitled to only 2c tax, instead of three, and you will be collecting 3c for the Government, and the Government will not accept any tax that it is not entitled to, and it will not become a party to an overcharge to the public. Besides, the tax must be shown on the ticket, and you cannot justify a 3c tax on a fifteen cent ticket; the Government requires that the ticket show 12c admission and 2c tax, totalling 14c.

What is true of the combined 15c charge is true also of the reduced combined 45c charge. The tax on 40c is 8c, or a combined charge of 48c. When you reduce the price to 45c and pay the Government 8c for the tax, the public pays 37c for the basic admission price. On 37c, the tax is, not 8c, but 7c, making a combined admission price of 44c. If you should charge 45c with the intent on of giving the Government 8c for tax, the Government will not accept it, for it will be entitled only to 7c. Besides, the tax facts must be shown on the tickets and you cannot print on the ticket 37c admission price plus 8c for tax; you must print 37c admission price plus 7c for tax, or a total of 44c.

The present 25c combined charge (22c admission and 3c tax) cannot be maintained under the new tax system either, by reason of the fact that the Federal Tax is 4c. Consequently, the exhibitor must charge 21c for admission and 4c for tax. He will thus absorb the loss of 1c himself. But he can charge 26c as a combined admission charge.

I hope that I have made the matter clear to you. If I have not, write me. You may write me also if you have any new thoughts that will, you believe, benefit the exhibitors if they were brought to their attention.

SUCCESS OF THE FOURTH WAR LOAN DRIVE A CREDIT TO THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY

Arthur Ungar, editor of *Daily Variety*, of Hollywood, in the March 6 issue, printed a warm tribute to Charlie Skouras, industry Chairman of the Fourth War Loan Drive, for guiding the drive to a successful completion. The Loan was over-subscribed by more than one billion dollars.

Those who know Charlie personally share in Arthur Ungar's feelings. It is a tribute he deserves well.

Arthur does not neglect Charlie's aides, Frank (Rick) Ricketson and B. V. Sturdivant, whom Charlie had taken out of his organization to aid him in the Drive, and states that, had they fallen down on their jobs, the discredit would have fallen mostly on Charlie. But the Drive was a success. And that speaks well of his aides.

Let it not be forgotten that, by making the Fourth War Loan Drive a success, Charlie Skouras has brought honor upon the entire industry. More now than ever can the motion picture industry tell the Government of what help it has been all along in the nation's war effort, not to mention the fact that never has the industry failed to come forward whenever it was required to perform a public service.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is glad to join Arthur Ungar in this richly deserved tribute to Charlie Skouras.

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Room 1812

New York 20, N. Y.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1944

No. 13

Abusive Tactics in Trade Screenings

In its March 15 issue, weekly *Variety* states that "the growing habit on the part of some distributors to throw shorts or newsreels in with tradeshowings of features for exhibitor-buyers and the press, is not only causing complaints but, in the opinion of sources, may further discourage attendance at such screenings."

Variety points out that these shorts and newsreels are generally put on to await the arrival of late-comers, usually an important circuit head or buyer, who had phoned that he had been detained, thus compelling those who had arrived on time to wait impatiently.

Without giving names, *Variety* tells of a few recent New York area tradeshowings, where offenses were committed. Two of the screenings mentioned were Paramount tradeshowings, at which I was present and, I might add, riled, for both times I was compelled to change my day's schedule because of Paramount's utter disregard for its announced screening time and order in which the features were to have been shown. I can readily understand, therefore, how the exhibitors felt, for, as *Variety* points out, "... when this is done, their appointments, train schedules or other plans are interfered with. This forces some to walk out on the picture before it's over."

At one of these tradeshowings, that of "Going My Way," a two-reel subject was screened first, delaying the showing of the feature for more than twenty-five minutes. This practice has been followed consistently by Paramount ever since tradeshowings were instituted. A few of the other major distributors practiced at times a similar abuse.

Another screening mentioned by *Variety*, which was also one of Paramount's, concerns the New York tradeshowing on February 24 of, "You Can't Ration Love," which was set for 10:15 A.M., and "The Navy Way," which was set for 11:30 A.M. Paramount reversed the order and screened "The Navy Way" at 10:15 A.M., because, according to *Variety*, an important buyer had arrived early and wanted to see only that picture. Accordingly, those who came early with the idea of seeing "You Can't Ration Love" were compelled to sit through "The Navy Way," and those who arrived at 11:30 A.M. to see "The Navy Way," found that it had already been shown. Is it any wonder, then, that exhibitors become discouraged with tradeshowings?

The distributors have often complained that tradeshowings are attended by the exhibitors sparsely, unless it is an important picture, and certain of them have advocated the elimination of tradeshowings. The distributors' methods in their handling of tradeshowings is notoriously bad, however, and one cannot blame the exhibitors for their thin attendance.

Ever since tradeshowings were instituted by the Consent Decree, the consenting distributors have had little regard for the exhibitor concerning the arrangement of dates and screening times, so that he might get the most benefit out of tradeshowings and at the same time not have them interfere too much with the business of operating his theatre.

The abuses of some of the tradeshowings held nationally in recent months are typical of what the exhibitor has had to

contend with since they were first started. Let us review them:

On January 21, of this year, tradeshowings were held of RKO's "Up In Arms," Warner Brothers' "Passage to Marseille," and MGM's "See Here Private Hargrove." The screening time varied in the different exchanges with these results:

Out of thirty-one exchange cities, the screenings conflicted in twenty-six. In twenty-one of these twenty-six exchanges, the exhibitor could see only two out of three features, and, in five exchanges, one out of three. In certain exchanges, where the screening time did not conflict on two pictures, the exhibitor had just about enough time to grab his hat and run for the next screening. In other exchanges, where the time did not conflict on any of the three pictures, the same thing happened, with the exhibitor dashing around without as much as a cup of coffee.

On January 4, of this year, tradeshowings were held of 20th Century-Fox's "The Lodger," and Paramount's "Timber Queen" and "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek." This is what happened:

Out of thirty exchange cities, the screenings conflicted in twenty-seven and, in each of these exchanges, the exhibitor had to choose between "The Lodger" and "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek." In twelve of the exchanges, those who selected "The Lodger" were compelled to skip both Paramount pictures, for the screening time of the Fox picture conflicted with the screening time of the other two features.

On November 5, 1943, tradeshowings were held of Paramount's "Minesweeper" and "No Time for Love," and MGM's "Lost Angel" and "Cry Havoc!" This is what happened:

Out of thirty exchanges, twenty-three had conflicting screenings. In ten of the twenty-three exchanges the exhibitor had to choose either the Paramount or the MGM features. In the remaining thirteen exchanges the exhibitor had to forego seeing one of the four pictures. In some of the cities, such as Indianapolis and New Haven, an exhibitor could manage to see all four pictures provided the screenings started on time and he was capable of running one hundred yards in ten seconds flat. And, at that, he had to remain in a projection room from 10 A.M. until after 5 P.M.—and no time out for lunch. Those who withstood that punishment probably didn't have enough strength to sit down and eat dinner.

Most of the aforementioned abuses are true of the tradeshowings held on November 4, 1943, for Paramount's "Henry Aldrich Haunts a House" and "Riding High," RKO's "The Falcon and the Co-Eds," and MGM's "Lost Angel" and "Cry Havoc!" which were shown only in Boston, Philadelphia and New York but which conflicted with the screening times of the other companies.

I could cite any number of other tradeshowings, but the ones I have cited are enough to prove that some kind of system must be adopted by the distributors to avoid conflict.

(Continued on last page)

"Up in Mabel's Room" with Marjorie Reynolds, Dennis O'Keefe, Gail Patrick and Mischa Auer

(United Artists, April 7; time, 75 min.)

A breezy, sophisticated farce-comedy, the kind that keeps audiences laughing from beginning to end. Producers Distributing Corporation made the story once before in 1926, and except for some minor changes the plot remains substantially the same. Most of the comedy is caused by the hero's efforts to keep secret from his wife the fact that, prior to their marriage, he had presented another woman with an inscribed piece of lingerie. His attempts to regain the lingerie at a week-end house party result in a series of bedroom mix-ups that provoke hearty laughter. The bedroom scenes have been handled in an inoffensive manner. The performances and the direction are good:—

Dennis O'Keefe finds himself in a dilemma when Gail Patrick, fiancée of Lee Bowman, his business associate, insists that he tell both Marjorie Reynolds, his jealous wife, and Bowman, about an inscribed pink slip he had given her prior to his marriage. Gail, who wished to avoid any misunderstanding after her marriage to Bowman, suggests to O'Keefe that he reveal the secret at a week-end party at Bowman's home. O'Keefe, to avoid rousing his wife's jealousy, arranges with Mischa Auer, Bowman's butler, to steal the slip from Gail's room and to destroy it. Other guests at the party included John Hubbard and Binnie Barnes, a young married couple, and Charlotte Greenwood, Bowman's spinster sister. When Auer makes several unsuccessful attempts to recover the slip, O'Keefe decides to help him. They prowl about the house together, hiding under beds and dashing in and out of bedroom windows to escape detection. As a result, things become thoroughly complicated: Hubbard accuses his wife of having an affair with O'Keefe, Bowman suspects the same of Gail, and Marjorie threatens to divorce O'Keefe. It soon becomes apparent to all that Gail and O'Keefe had once been very friendly. Matters become even more complicated when Gail, who had agreed to mind a friend's baby, slyly permits the others to believe that she and O'Keefe were the child's parents. O'Keefe eventually makes a clean breast of things to Marjorie, and all three couples become reconciled.

Tom Reed wrote the screen play, based on the stage play by Otto Harrach and Wilson Collison. Edward Small produced it, and Allan Dwan directed it.

There are no objectionable situations.

"It Happened Tomorrow" with Dick Powell, Linda Darnell and Jack Oakie

(United Artists, Feb. 25; time, 85 min.)

A good entertainment. It has some unusually good comedy situations, a novel plot, and engaging performances. The story, which is a cleverly contrived fantasy, revolves around a young newspaperman, who manages to obtain a copy of tomorrow's newspaper today, thus enabling him to know in advance the events that are going to happen on the following day. His attempts to capitalize on this accurate guide to the future involve him in a series of highly amusing and, at times, exciting escapades. A humorous angle to the story is the fact that, in learning of forthcoming events, he learns also of his pending death. The accuracy of that prediction gives the film a surprise climax. Dick Powell, as the reporter, and Linda

Darnell, as his sweetheart, handle the romantic situations in a humorous and pleasant way. Jack Oakie, as a clairvoyant, provokes considerable laughter. The action takes place in 1890:—

At a party celebrating Dick Powell's promotion from obituary writer to full-fledged reporter, John Philliber, aged employee on the Evening News, philosophically tells Powell that tomorrow's news is no greater mystery than today's news. Later that evening Powell visits a night spot, where Jack Oakie, a clairvoyant, and Linda Darnell, his niece, entertain the patrons by making predictions. Powell flirts with Linda and succeeds in making a date with her for the following day. On the way home, he meets Philliber, who hands him a copy of the next day's newspaper, containing news reports of events that had not yet happened. The following morning, when certain of the events reported come true, Powell realizes that he can become a great reporter by writing in advance news stories of forthcoming events. Reading in the paper about a holdup at the local opera house, Powell prepares his story, hands it to George Cleveland, his editor, and rushes to the scene with Linda in time to see the robbery occur. Cleveland, amazed at Powell's uncanny ability, gives him a raise, but the police, suspicious that he had a hand in the robbery, arrest him. When Philliber appears at the jail window with another copy of "tomorrow's" newspaper, which tells where the bandits will be captured, Powell informs the police and gains his release. After a series of romantic complications, Powell and Linda marry. He obtains another "tomorrow's" newspaper from Philliber, and is terrified when he reads a prediction of his own death on the following day. He decides to win lots of money for Linda before he dies, by betting on the races, the results of which were predicted in the paper. He wins sixty thousand dollars, but the losing bookmaker steals his wallet and flees. In the ensuing chase, the bandit is killed and is erroneously identified as Powell, because of the wallet found on his person. Hence, the story of Powell's death appears in that day's newspaper as predicted. Powell returns to his newspaper office and, asking for Philliber, is astounded to learn that he had died three days previously.

Dudley Nichols and Rene Clair wrote the screen play, Arnold Pressburger produced it, and Mr. Clair directed it. The cast includes Edgar Kennedy, Sig Ruman, Edward Brophy and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Lady in the Death House" with Jean Parker and Lionel Atwill

(PRC, March 15; time, 59 min.)

A fair program murder-mystery-melodrama. Although the story is hackneyed, it should satisfy the followers of this type of entertainment, for it keeps the spectator in suspense and the identity of the murderer is not made known until the very end. There is some excitement towards the finish, where a mad search is made for the Governor in an effort to halt the execution of the heroine, but for the most part the action is slow-moving. There is some human interest awakened by the sympathy one feels for Jean Parker, who is accused of the murder unjustly. The production values are fairly good:—

Lionel Atwill, a criminologist, and Douglas Fowley, a state executioner, rescue Jean Parker when her dress catches fire in a cafe. The three became fast

friends. Fowley falls in love with Jean, but she declines to marry him because of his odious position. Unknown to Fowley and Atwill, Jean was troubled by a racketeer, who blackmailed her to keep her father's past a secret, and by Marcia Mae Jones, her younger sister, who was having an affair with John Maxwell, a dubious character. On one of the racketeer's visits to Jean's apartment, he is slain mysteriously. Circumstantial evidence points to Jean as the murderess, and she is tried and convicted of the crime. Atwill, believing Jean innocent, investigates and finds a car key on the floor of her apartment. Various clues lead him to believe that the key belonged to Marcia's boy-friend. He makes Marcia realize the plight of her sister, and she admits that the key belonged to Maxwell. Atwill, aided by Marcia, captures Maxwell and compels him to confess that he had visited the apartment in search of Marcia and, finding the racketeer counting a roll of bills, had murdered him for the money. The confession comes a few minutes before the hour set for Jean's execution, and the warden, unable to locate the Governor, orders Fowley, the executioner, to throw the switch. Jean's life is spared when Fowley barricades himself in a panel room containing the switch, holding up the execution in time for the Governor to grant her a last minute reprieve.

Harry O. Hoyt wrote the screen play, Jack Schwarz produced it, and Steve Sekely directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Ladies Courageous" with Loretta Young and Geraldine Fitzgerald

(Universal, March 17; time, 88 min.)

A routine war melodrama, of program grade. According to the credits, the film has been sanctioned by the U. S. Army Air Force as the official motion picture story of the WASPS (Women's Air Force Service Pilots). If so, I am inclined to feel that someone in the Air Force has little regard for the WASPS, for the film is far from a complimentary tribute. The story, which is told in a series of thinly related flashbacks, revolves around a group of volunteer women flyers, who ferry planes for the Air Force, and who give the spectator the impression that they are the last persons that one would entrust with valuable aircraft, because of their emotional instability. For example, one girl commits suicide by crashing her plane, because another girl has designs on her husband; a second girl, to draw attention to herself, disobeys orders not to land on a flying field and deliberately smashes her plane; a third girl, a moronic "jitterbug" type, runs around like an idiot in a vain attempt at comedy. No fault can be found with the players; they are handicapped by a mediocre script, sorely lacking in dramatic power. The backgrounds are authentic, and one or two flying sequences mildly exciting:—

In the midst of Loretta Young's efforts to have the WASPS militarized as part of the U. S. Army instead of continuing as a civilian unit attached to the Air Force, Lois Collier, a member of the WASPS, commits suicide when she learns that Diana Barrymore, another WASP, had been carrying on an affair with her husband. The incident dashes Loretta's hopes for militarization. Complications increase when Geraldine Fitzgerald, Loretta's sister, who was continuously in trouble because of stunt flying, ignores orders and damages her plane. Assuming responsibil-

ity for the adverse events, Loretta tenders her resignation to Col. Richard Fraser. Added to Loretta's grief was the fact that Philip Terry, her husband, had been reported missing in action in India. Geraldine, returning to the base after her latest mishap, learns that she had been "washed out" and that Loretta had resigned. She steals a plane in a fit of temper and crashes before she can take off. As Loretta comforts Geraldine in the base hospital, Colonel Fraser informs her that the WASPS had been made a part of the Army, and that he had withheld her resignation. Loretta's joy is complete when her husband arrives safe and sound just as she prepares to lead the women pilots on their first overseas flight.

Norman Reilly Raines and Doris Gilbert wrote the screen play, Walter Wanger produced it, and John Rawlins directed it. The cast includes Anne Gwynne, Evelyn Ankers, June Vincent, Frank Jenks, David Bruce, Samuel S. Hinds and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Rosie, the Riveter" with Jane Frazee, Frank Albertson, and Vera Vague

(Republic, April 9; time, 75 min.)

An amusing program comedy with music. The story, which has a farcical flavor, revolves around two girls, day-workers in a defense plant, who, because of the housing shortage, are compelled to share one room with two men, workers on the night shift. Though there is nothing novel in the plot nor in the characterizations, the witty dialogue, comical situations, and Jane Frazee's very pleasant singing, manage to keep one consistently entertained. Most of the comedy is provoked by the constant feuding between the girls and the men, and the tricks they play on each other to gain sole possession of the room. The romantic interest is routine:—

Jane Frazee, Vera Vague, Frank Albertson, and Frank Jenks, defense workers, arrive simultaneously at Maude Eburne's rooming house to rent the one available room in town. After much arguing, the girls agree to share the room with the men, occupying it in shifts. The other occupants in the house were Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer and Louise Erickson, Miss Eburne's grandchildren, who gave the new roomers little privacy, and Ellen Lowe, Miss Eburne's middle-aged daughter, who constantly quarreled with Lloyd Corrigan, her shiftless husband. Worried lest Frank Fenton, her conservative fiance and plant personnel manager, learn of her sharing a room with men, Jane conceals the set-up from him. Jane and Albertson continuously feud over how long each occupies the room. The tricks they play on each other eventually lands them in a police station, where the judge, believing them to be man and wife, offers to release them if they will kiss and make up. Both take advantage of the offer, and a news photographer snaps their picture as they embrace. Fenton, seeing the photo in a newspaper, breaks his engagement to Jane. Albertson, feeling responsible for the break, calls on Fenton and persuades him to seek a reconciliation with Jane. But Jane, touched by Albertson's consideration, realizes her love for him and dismisses Fenton. Both are reunited at a gala party to celebrate the plant's "E" award.

Jack Townley and Alcen Leslie wrote the screen play, Armand Schaefer produced it, and Joseph Stanley directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

So long as the consenting distributors are permitted to set tradeshowing dates and screening times that conflict with each other's pictures, to disregard announced screening times and the order in which pictures will be shown, and to screen on one day an excessive number of features, tending to keep an exhibitor away from his theatre for too long a time, the intent and purpose of the tradeshowing provision will be defeated, for, under such conditions, an exhibitor can be discouraged from attending screenings, and the distributors' right to complain that tradeshowings are a waste of time will be false.

The tradeshowing of features before they may be licensed for exhibition was put into the Consent Decree at the insistence of the Department of Justice, out of a feeling that the purchaser should be given an opportunity to see what he is buying. If the Department would give that opportunity to the exhibitor in the full sense, it should insist that the aforementioned abuses be brought to an end, and it should provide for their elimination in the amended decree, if any.

CORRECTION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR IN LAST WEEK'S TAX EDITORIAL

In the distance between this office and the printer, a word dropped out of a line in one of the paragraphs of last week's editorial, headed, "Facts About the New Tax Rate," altering its meaning. The line to which I refer is in the fourth paragraph, first column, on page 48; it reads as follows:

"There is no tax on tickets sold to men and women in the uniform of the U. S. armed forces." The lost word is "change," and its location is after the word "tax." The paragraph should have read:

"There is no tax *change* on tickets sold to men and women in the uniform of the U. S. armed forces."

In order to make matters clearer to the readers of this publication, let me expand the interpretation of that part of the tax law: If your basic admission charge to adults is 52c (making 62c with the tax) and you wish to reduce it for members of the U. S. armed forces to (for example) 22c, the tax you will have to collect is, not 10c, (as would be the case if the reduction applied to any other class of patrons), but only 4c. In other words, the tax you will have to charge to members of the U. S. armed forces will be based, not on the full-rate ticket, but on the price you charge them. If you should admit them free, you make no charge for tax whatever.

I wish that you would insert the word "change," with pen and ink, over a caret ("^"), after the word "tax" in your copy of last week's HARRISON'S REPORTS so that those exhibitors who may read that editorial but may miss this correction will not be under a misunderstanding as to the tax they should charge.

Another typographical error, a slight one, occurred also in the seventh line, tenth paragraph, in the same column. The line reads: "price 11c, 12c, or 13c, as the case may be; . . ." It should have read: "price 12c, 13c, or 14c . . ." This error becomes self-evident when read along with the preceding line: "the tax on 10c, 11c, or 12c is 2c, . . ."

Incidentally, Pete Wood, business manager of the Ohio exhibitor organization, in his March 17 bulletin, advises the members of his organization that, on reduced price tickets to students, they should have special tickets printed for the purpose. The same holds true on the tickets sold to the members of the U. S. armed forces.

What is true of the exhibitors of Ohio is true of exhibitors everywhere in the United States.

GIVE COLUMBIA CREDIT FOR TELLING THE TRUTH!

Columbia has at last come forward to give the facts in at least one instance—in its business relationship with Rosalind Russell. In an advertisement that it placed in last week's trade papers, Columbia asks:

"Who says we lost Rosalind Russell?"

"Miss Russell's contract with Columbia for the next three years provides that each year she will appear in two motion pictures made by this company."

At the foot of the page the advertisement carries the Columbia seal, and at the left-hand side of the page is a picture of beautiful Rosalind. It is an impressive advertisement, and the exhibitors should feel grateful to Columbia for having taken them into its confidence and assured them that Rosalind Russell is still with Columbia, occupying part of the Columbia constellation.

But here is something that the exhibitors would want, I am sure, to know about, regardless of whether they are buying Columbia pictures or not: When the salesman sold to the exhibitors "Ten Percent Woman" in the 1942-43 season, Columbia had Miss Russell under contract. Why, then, didn't Columbia deliver that picture to the 1942-43 contract-holders, instead of holding it back and selling it, under the title, "What a Woman!" for harsher terms! No doubt many of those who had that picture under contract in the 1942-43 season were asked to buy it in the 1943-44 season on terms less advantageous.

Is that the only picture Columbia withheld during that season?

This matter has been treated so often in HARRISON'S REPORTS that it is hardly necessary to print the information that it has printed before. All it wants to say now is that Columbia withheld eight pictures from that season. And yet this company has the effrontery to appeal to you all for support in making its "Dates to Win" sales campaign successful!

But you are answering that appeal very nobly: as stated in last week's HARRISON'S REPORTS, of exhibitors representing one hundred and fifty theatres in a recent exhibitor meeting, only two had stated that they had bought Columbia pictures. Of these two exhibitors, one had bought Columbia pictures early in the season and could not get out of his contract, and the other had to have that product because of competition.

In view of the fact that the increase of a star's popularity depends on full exhibition coverage of the pictures in which she appears, I am sure that it will be interesting to Miss Russell's agent, Mr. Frank Vincent, whose address is 9441 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif., if you should write to tell him whether you are or are not showing Rosalind Russell pictures, and if not why not.

ANOTHER EXHIBITOR GONE WRONG

Max Fellerman, for years buyer and booker for the RKO theatre circuit, resigned recently from that position and has become a distributor, now handling Banner Productions, which are being released through Monogram.

The pictures produced by Banner include "Spotlight Scandals," with Billy Gilbert and Frank Fay; the East Side Kid pictures, with Leo Gorcey and Huntz Hall; and the Bela Lugosi thrillers, featuring Bela Lugosi, John Carradine, and George Zucco.

As a buyer and booker, Mr. Fellerman has been popular among the distributors because of his fairness and straight dealing.

This picture wishes Mr. Fellerman the best of success.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1944

No. 14

LET US TELL THE PUBLIC ABOUT IT!

"Once again," says Tom Pryor in his column that appeared in the *New York Times* of Sunday, March 19, "the motion picture industry has rolled up its sleeves and stands poised to do another war service. This time it is out to help in every way to put over the top the 1944 Red Cross Drive for \$200,000,000 . . .

"Smarting under reports, both from correspondents on the spot and returning travellers, that our frontline men are not getting the best and latest in film entertainment, the industry's War Activities Committee is preparing a campaign to tell the public, and service men, too, all about the industry's efforts. And the War Activities Committee has a good story to tell, having to date contributed, without cost to the Army Overseas Motion Picture Service, 11,782 prints of feature pictures and 17,624 prints of short subjects for free showing to troops in combat areas, Red Cross hospitals and isolated outposts . . ."

As stated in the March 11 issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS, Mr. Nate Blumberg, president of Universal Pictures Corporation, assured this writer that the industry leaders will soon resort to institutional advertising to tell the public what the motion picture industry has done and is doing to further the nation's war efforts and to promote public welfare. Now comes also Mr. Pryor and informs us that it will be done.

But when? Valuable time is being wasted by procrastination, while other industries are stealing the motion picture industry's thunder.

To repeat what has been said in these columns before: the other industries are spending millions of dollars, not to sell goods—most of them cannot produce for civilian consumption—but merely to keep their names before the public and to gain its good will.

Take, for instance, White or Dodge trucks; the manufacturers of them cannot sell trucks to any one else but the United States Government or to those who have its blessing. The Chevrolet ad cannot sell a single car to the public. The Pullman ad? You know that in most instances you have to wait a month before you can get reservations. General Motors cannot sell a single car of any of its brands—Oldsmobile, Pontiac, Buick or any other, because they are manufacturing war goods. The stunningly beautiful Goodyear Aircraft ad—will that sell a single Goodyear plane or a single Goodyear tire to a civilian? And how about the Allison engine? Can General Motors manufacture these engines fast enough for the Government?

Take another firm—the firm that manufactures Hoover vacuum cleaners: Can any civilian buy a single Hoover vacuum cleaner? What good will the Studebaker ad do to the company's car-sales now? Can the Martin Aircraft sell a single plane to the public by means of its impressive ad? Or Remington Rand? Or the Frigidaire Division of General Motors?

But they have an effect, as said—that of keeping the manufacturers' names before the public, gaining their good will. And the money to pay for these ads comes not from the per-

centage of profits that is allowed by the Government to manufacturers of war goods.

There is so much that the industry could tell the public by means of institutional ads! Take, for instance, Mr. Pryor's statement that the War Activities Committee is preparing to tell the public how many feature films the industry has contributed to the nation's armed forces for the entertainment of the men, no matter in how remote spots they are. An ad writer with imagination could bring tears to the mother, father, wife, sweetheart, brother, sister and friends, as well as other relatives who might read the ads, of every man in the armed forces of the nation.

Is selfishness preventing the industry leaders from resorting to institutional advertising? Perhaps the head of each company wants to have the name of his own company emblazoned on the pages of the national publications. If not, why are they letting a marvelous opportunity to gain the public's good will go by? Institutional advertising resorted to after the war will not have anywhere near the effect that it will have now. When the war is over, the public will no longer be as amenable to emotional appeal as it is today.

The fruit of public good will is ripe and plentiful. If the industry leaders do nothing about picking it, because each one is planning on how to get the biggest plum, they may find very soon that the fruit has become over-ripe and useless.

IS THE TAIL WAGGING THE DOG?

There was a time when the picture industry was draining the stage of stars. Picture producers would pay any price to get a stage celebrity to take the path that led to Hollywood. But today conditions have reversed themselves, and we see many screen stars take the path that leads to the New York stage.

In an article that appeared in the March issue of *Motion Picture*, under the heading, "But They Still Love Hollywood," Paul Denis, the *New York Evening Post* columnist, formerly with *Billboard*, gives a list of the Hollywood celebrities that either are appearing or have appeared on the New York stage in recent months.

"For years," says Mr. Denis, "Hollywood players have been singing the Jimmy Durante ditty, 'I Can Do Without Broadway,' but this season, the tune is passe. Scores of Hollywoodites are now on Broadway, planning to go to Broadway, or just closed on Broadway . . .

"Margaret Sullavan, Melville Cooper, Henry Daniell, Mary Martin, Margaret Lindsay, Ralph Bellamy, Bert Wheeler, and Marta Eggerth won fine critics' notices . . .

"There is no doubt that a stellar role in a Broadway stage hit practically guarantees a Hollywood comeback. John Boles put it neatly: 'If a movie actor does a fine job in a hit show, he can go back to Hollywood on his own terms. If he is a flop, he'll have to sneak back to Hollywood because bad news travels fast. A Broadway show is a risky thing for a movie actor; the odds are against you.' Boles is a feature of the hit musical, 'One Touch of Venus' . . .

(Continued on last page)

"Jamboree" with Ruth Terry and George Byron

(Republic, May 5; time, 72 min.)

Pleasant program fare. It is another one of those comedies with rural music, featuring popular radio entertainers, the sort that Republic specializes in. The picture is well suited for the family trade, and should, for that reason, fare best in small-town and neighborhood theatres. The story, which revolves around two bands that impersonate each other in a scheme to win a radio contract, is thin but amusing. The music is tuneful, and the comedy situations fairly good. Among the better known radio entertainers who take part in the action are Don Wilson, the radio announcer; Rufe Davis; the Music Maids; Isabel Randolph, better known to radio fans as "Mrs. Uppington"; Freddie Fisher and his Schnickelfritz Band; and Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadors:—

George Byron, agent for Freddie Fisher's band, overhears Paul Harvey, head of a food firm, instruct Don Wilson, his assistant, to engage Ernest Tubb's band for a radio show. Hoping to become Tubb's agent, Byron hurries to Greenfield, where Tubb and his band worked on a farm operated by Ruth Terry, her four sisters, and their aunt. He arrives soon after Tubb's band quit their jobs and leave for the city. Hitting upon a scheme, Byron persuades Ruth to hire Fisher's band to harvest the crops. Byron teaches Fisher's band to play in the rural style of Tubb's band; by impersonating them, Byron hoped to trick Wilson into signing Fisher's band to a contract. The scheme is successful. The boys prepare to quit the farm, but Ruth, needing their help, refuses to give them certificates of availability, compelling them to remain. Meanwhile, in the city, Harvey, angered at the failure of the band to show up for rehearsals, instructs Wilson to engage Fisher's band as a substitute. Wilson, unaware that he had made a deal with Fisher's band, and seeking to placate Harvey, engages Tubb's band, without knowing their identity, and arranges with them to impersonate Fisher's band. Back on the farm, the boys finish harvesting the crops and receive their certificates from Ruth. En route to the city, they hear Tubb's band impersonating them on the radio show. They rush to the auditorium where the program was being held and, after a series of mix-ups, establish their identity. Harvey settles the argument by engaging both bands.

Jack Townley wrote the screen play, Armand Schaefer produced it, and Joseph Santley directed it.

"Follow the Boys" with an all-star cast

(Universal, April 7; time, 120 min.)

"Follow the Boys," which pays tribute to the part show business is playing in bringing relaxation to the men and women in the armed forces at home and abroad, has turned out to be a glorified two-hour vaudeville show, the sort that should easily meet with the approval of most audiences. It should do well at the box-office, because of the players' marquee value. As a stirring entertainment, however, it misses its mark; it lacks a dramatic punch. The story is extremely thin and trite, serving merely as a respite between the specialty numbers of the different stars. Highlights of the film are singing by Jeanette MacDonald, Sophie Tucker, and Dinah Shore; a "jitterbug" song and dance routine, with Peggy Ryan and Donald O'Connor; harmonizing by the Andrews Sisters and

the Delta Rhythm Boys; a magic show, with Orson Welles and Marlene Dietrich; W. C. Fields in his familiar but amusing pool table skit; Arthur Rubinstein, celebrated pianist, in a piano recital; Carmen Amaya's flamingo dancing; Leonard Gautier's Bricklayers, a clever dog act; and music by the orchestras of Ted Lewis, Freddie Slack, Charlie Spivack, and Louis Jordan. Others appearing in brief bits are Martha O'Driscoll, Maxie Rosenbloom, and Charles Butterworth. Numerous other stars appear briefly in a Hollywood Victory Committee sequence. The music is a pleasing assortment of old and new tunes:—

Soon after the decline of vaudeville, George Raft, a dancer, tries burlesque and fails. He goes to Hollywood, determined to make good in pictures. He makes the acquaintance of Vera Zorina, a dancing star, and convinces her that she needs a dancing partner. She accepts Raft as her partner and, together, they become the rage of the screen. They fall in love with each other and marry. When the Japs attack Pearl Harbor, Raft tries to enlist but is rejected because of a bad knee. Learning that the soldiers in camp need entertainment, Raft organizes a company of movie stars and puts on a show at one of the camps. The success of the show pleases Raft, and he becomes instrumental in forming the Hollywood Victory Committee, which, together with the U.S.O. Camp Shows, arranges for entertainment units to visit the camps at home and abroad. Unaware that Vera was to become a mother, Raft quarrels with her over her failure to cooperate in the program. He leaves her without learning the truth. Vera informs Grace McDonald, Raft's sister, of her condition, but makes her promise to keep it from Raft; she wanted Raft to return to her because he loved her, and not because of the baby. Raft departs for Australia with a camp show without bidding Vera goodbye. At sea, Grace breaks her promise and informs him of Vera's condition. Raft is elated. As he stages a show aboard ship, a Jap torpedo strikes. Most of the entertainers are rescued, but Raft loses his life. Vera, after giving birth to her baby, determines to carry on Raft's fine work.

Lou Breslow and Gertrude Purcell wrote the screen play, Charles K. Feldman produced it, and Eddie Sutherland directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Whistler" with Richard Dix and J. Carrol Naish

(Columbia, March 30; time 61 min.)

Although it is a cheerless entertainment, this is a fairly interesting psychological program melodrama, based on the radio mystery series of the same title. The popularity enjoyed by the radio program may be of help at the box-office. The action, which revolves around a ruthless murderer who seeks to kill a man by instilling in him a fear of death, unfolds in an interesting manner and holds one in suspense. One feels sympathetic towards Richard Dix, because of the mental tortures he suffers in trying to escape death, after arranging to have himself murdered. J. Carrol Naish, as the killer, does well with the part. There is no comedy to relieve the tension, and the romantic interest is slight and unimportant:—

Remorseful over the drowning of his wife in a shipwreck, and dejected because he felt that his friends suspected him of letting her die while he saved others, Richard Dix, through Don Costello, a gangster, hires an unknown assassin to kill him (Dix).

Costello, shortly after he arranges with J. Carroll Naish to commit the murder, loses his life in an altercation with the police. Dix, unaware of the identity of the man assigned to kill him, settles his private and business affairs in preparation for his death. After an unsuccessful attempt on Dix's life, Naish, a student of necrophobia (fear of death), decides to achieve Dix's death through fear. Dix's motive for his self-imposed death is eliminated when he receives word that his wife had been rescued, but that the Japanese held her prisoner. He sets out on a frantic search for his potential murderer, whose identity he did not know. Naish makes his trailing of Dix evident, endeavoring to instill in him a fear of death. Aware that Naish was continuously following him, Dix confronts him but is unable to convince him that he was the instigator of his own potential murder. Dix, distraught and weary, tires frantically to shake off Naish. The chase leads to the waterfront, where a kindly watchman takes the weary man in hand. Recognizing Dix as a prominent business man who had been reported missing, the watchman notifies the police. Naish, realizing that his experiment had failed, and to prevent Dix from identifying him to the police, fires through a window in an attempt to kill him. The gunfire is returned by a detective, and Naish falls dead.

Eric Taylor wrote the screen play, Rudolph C. Flothow produced it, and William Castle directed it. Adult entertainment.

**"Tampico" with Edward G. Robinson,
Lynn Bari and Victor McLaglen**
(20th Century-Fox, April; time, 75 min.)

A moderately interesting program melodrama, combining espionage and war action. It lacks a plausible plot, yet it has plentiful action of the type to hold one in suspense and should, therefore, prove acceptable to the action fans who are not too exacting in their demands. It has some human appeal, comedy, and a mild romance. The closing scenes are the most exciting, for it is there that Robinson rounds up a Nazi spy ring and clears his wife of suspicion as a spy. Another exciting sequence is the one in which the survivors of a torpedoed tanker swim through flaming oil to reach the safety of a lifeboat. The production values are good:—

Edward G. Robinson, captain of a tanker, rescues the survivors of a torpedoed ship, among whom is Lynn Bari, a show girl. Reaching Tampico, the tanker is boarded by immigration inspectors who examine the survivors' passports. Lynn, claiming that she had lost her identification papers, is ordered interned until her story can be checked. Robinson, however, vouches for her and gains her release, much to the disgust of Victor McLaglen, his close friend and first mate, who openly distrusts Lynn. Ashore, Lynn and Robinson marry after a whirlwind courtship. Lynn learns of Robinson's secret orders to sail on the following night, and is warned by him to keep it quiet. At sea, the ship is followed by a Nazi submarine and sunk. Robinson is rescued, but McLaglen, who favored surrender, was among those missing. Returning to Tampico, Robinson learns from Naval authorities that Lynn's story about her lost identification papers was false, and that they suspected her of having something to do with the sinking of his ship. He questions Lynn and refuses to believe her when she tells him that she had been a stowaway. Angered, he leaves her. To

help uncover a spy ring known to exist in Tampico, Robinson, working with the authorities, leads everyone to believe that he had been beached. His treasonable remarks eventually bring him in contact with Tonio Selwart, leader of the ring, who offers to pay him well for vital information about ship movements. After satisfying himself that Lynn was in no way connected with the ring, Robinson, aided by the authorities, captures the spies and discovers McLaglen, his pal, working with them. He kills McLaglen in a fight. His task finished, Robinson effects a reconciliation with Lynn.

Kenneth Gamet, Fred Niblo, Jr., and Richard Macaulay wrote the screen play, Robert Bassler produced it, and Lothar Mendes directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

NEW YORK EXHIBITORS ENDORSE CHICAGO CONFERENCE DECISIONS

It seems as if efforts are being made to sabotage the work of the Chicago Conference of Independent Exhibitors by claims to the effect that independent exhibitors are not in accord with the decisions of the Conference and the report made to the Department of Justice by the committee of five appointed by the Conference.

To spike this propaganda, the Unaffiliated Independent Exhibitors, a Greater New York organization, at a special meeting held on Thursday, March 23, passed unanimously a resolution making known to the industry that they are fully in accord with the work of the Conference.

Another resolution was passed authorizing Mr. Jesse L. Stern, president, Mr. Julius Charnow, vice-president, and Mr. Jacob Leff, counsel, to represent the organization in any negotiations or matters concerned with the Department of Justice.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is not in a position to know exactly how many independent exhibitors are not in accord with the action taken by the Conference. But as many as there may be, they are definitely an insignificant minority, for in attendance at the Chicago conference were representatives of twenty-two national and regional independent exhibitor organizations, comprising a large majority of the organized independent exhibitors. All approved unanimously the action taken by the Conference.

The independent exhibitors are more united now than ever. So don't be misled by those who try to tell you otherwise.

GET A COPY OF THE REPORT ON ALL PERCENTAGE PICTURES YOU PLAY

It seems to be unbelievable, but careful investigation proves it to be true, that checkers often refuse to leave with the exhibitor a copy of the report of the receipts.

HARRISON'S REPORTS suggests that, unless the checker prepares a copy for you, you refuse to sign the report.

After signing the report, keep a copy before delivering the remaining copies to the checker.

Of course, the checkers do not resort to such an unfair practice with the circuits, either affiliated or unaffiliated; they resort to it only with small exhibitors, who in many instances are not fully informed as to their rights, being away from the center of distribution.

"In accepting stage roles, some Hollywood players seek to prove to movie producers that they are still good box-office; some hope the publicity will stimulate interest in their screen comeback; some insist they just had to get away from those awful cameras and, for a change, work before live audiences; and others want to achieve poise and learn acting through the stage. In many cases, it was just plain business: the player had no movie offers and was glad to take a stage role. After all, even movie actors have to eat . . ."

That a stage appearance of a screen player teaches much to him no one can doubt; and very often such an appearance brings a player back in glory. Can we forget Katherine Hepburn? She was washed-out, according to Harry Brandt, the New York exhibitor—she had become box-office poison. Her appearance in the "Philadelphia Story" was so successful that Metro took her back to Hollywood and had her appear in her own stage success. The results are history.

A player's appearance in a stage play, even if it is a flop, can do that player no harm, even if he or she had been ignored in Hollywood. Very often a talent scout will see something in that player and will make his report to the studio accordingly, with the result that the player is called back for a part. In these days of talent shortage, the Hollywood producers should welcome back into the fold a player who has had experience on the stage as well as on the screen.

LET THE SAVINGS BE PASSED TO THE CUSTOMERS

The exhibitors of the country are indebted to Billy Wilkerson, of *The Hollywood Reporter*, for informing them of the low cost of "Cover Girl," the Columbia Technicolor musical. Writes Bill Wilkerson:

"We have no idea of the cost of Columbia's 'Cover Girl.' We asked, and were given some double talk for an answer. However, we feel certain that, whatever the cost, it totaled about 50 percent less than any of our other majors would be compelled to put into such an extravagantly mounted production, because that's the careful way Mr. Harry Cohn runs his plant . . ."

When Columbia salesmen demanded high rentals for their big pictures, they were giving as an excuse the high cost of production. Since they cannot put forward such excuses on "Cover Girl," HARRISON'S REPORTS hopes that they will let the exhibitors have this picture at one-half the film rentals of the other big Columbia pictures.

Let the savings be passed to the customers!

WISE WORDS FROM BILL RODGERS

In a speech that William F. Rodgers, vice-president and general sales manager of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, made to his sales forces at their recent sales meeting in Chicago, he said partly the following:

"We believe that our success will continue to be based upon the success of our customers. Such security to both, forms a permanent structure, built upon a solid foundation. The time is fast approaching when film-rental terms will be calculated only after the operating expense of a theatre is taken into consideration.

"The average theatre owner expects, we believe, only a fair deal, and it is only fair to give consideration to his problems among which house expenses are, of course, of first importance . . ."

"We believe that a frank approach to this problem will eliminate much of the debate too many times involved in the writing of a deal.

"The success of our company is not predicated on the losses of our customers; on the contrary, on their success . . ."

"Through the sliding scale we have made adjustments automatic, eliminating the necessity of any exhibitor feeling that he is humbling himself to get that to which he is justly entitled . . ."

In his speech, Mr. Rodgers announced also that, because his salesmen are closer to the problems of the exhibitors than

are the home office executives, he has granted them the right to make proper designations and reclassifications without referring the matter to the home office.

Ever since Bill Rodgers became head of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer distribution department his one aim has been to gain the good will of the exhibitors. His statements in his Chicago speech indicate that he has not changed his original policy.

Does it pay a distributor to gain the good will of its customers?

There was a time around 1931 when you could have shot a cannonball into any of the exchanges of a certain company and you would not have hit an exhibitor, because when its salesmen, having good product, were "king pins" in the previous years, they treated the exhibitors ruthlessly; when the quality of its product deteriorated, the exhibitors retaliated by refusing to support it. This company learned a good lesson, and they are now acting differently.

HARRISON'S REPORTS hopes that Bill Rodgers' spirit will permeate every executive and salesman in the distribution end; this will be a much happier industry if it does.

A MEMBERSHIP IN AN EXHIBITOR ORGANIZATION PAYS DIVIDENDS

Writes Mr. Leo F. Wolcott, president of Allied-Independent Theatre Owners of Iowa-Nebraska, in his March 20 bulletin:

"The flood of memberships which came in following our recent membership call makes a man feel good; that his work these past years has not been in vain. Thanks a million! . . . Your dues are a legitimate expense chargeable off in your books just like advertising or any other expenses . . ."

Instead of Mr. Wolcott's thanking the new members, the new members should thank Mr. Wolcott, not once but every day, for were it not for him and the likes of him tolerating indifference and neglect of exhibitors, and at times abuse from them, there would have been no organizations, and the exhibitors would have no guidance whatever in these troubled times.

The views of this paper in regards to exhibitor organizations are too well known to need reiteration: HARRISON'S REPORTS has always felt that a membership in an exhibitor organization is, not an expense, but an investment. It is an insurance.

If any exhibitor, not a subscriber to HARRISON'S REPORTS, should happen to read this editorial and wants to find out just what benefits an exhibitor who becomes a member of an organization receives, let him write to this office and I shall be glad to send him a copy of the January 8 issue so that he may read the editorial headed, "The Value of Organization"; then he will know!

MANPOWER SHORTAGE AN INDUSTRY PROBLEM

According to the news from Hollywood, more hundreds will be lost by the industry to the draft because of the tightening up of Selective Service regulations.

The continued loss of Hollywood talent cannot help affecting the producers seriously. If last year it was difficult to cast a picture and to obtain the necessary technicians, it will be much more difficult in the future, with the result that the quality of pictures, not only from the emotional point of view, but also from that of the physical, will suffer greatly.

Few exhibitors realize the importance of the assistant directors, production managers, paint men, green men (those who supply imitation grass, trees, and the like), not to say of supporting actors. It is really these who make it possible for the director to put the screen play on the raw film efficiently. Inferior technical personnel cannot help having an effect upon the quality of a picture. It is for this reason that the quality of pictures other than of the big ones has deteriorated to so great a degree lately.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

Vol. XXVI

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RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR FEATURES
Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

5036 The Racket Man—Neal-Bates	Jan. 18
5020 Swing Out the Blues—Haymes-Merrick	Jan. 20
5022 Beautiful But Broke—Davis-Frazee	Jan. 28
5006 None Shall Escape—Hunt-Knox	Feb. 3
5204 The Vigilantes Ride—Hayden (56 m.)	Feb. 3
5220 Cowboy Canteen—Starrett-Frazee (72 m.)	Feb. 18
5042 The Ghost that Walks Alone—Lake-Carter	Feb. 10
5018 Nine Girls—Harding-Keyes	Feb. 17
5038 Sailor's Holiday—Lake-Lawrence	Feb. 24
5013 Hey, Rookie—Miller-Parks	Mar. 9
5039 Two-Man Submarine—Savage-Neal	Mar. 16
5205 Sundown Valley—Starrett (55 m.)	Mar. 23
The Whistler—Dix-Stuart	Mar. 30
Cover Girl—Hayworth-Kelly	Apr. 6
5015 Jam Session—Ann Miller	Apr. 13
Girl in the Case—Carter-Lowe	Apr. 20
Wyoming Hurricane—Russell-Hayden	Apr. 20

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 6

413 Thousands Cheer—Grayson-Kelly	January
414 Cross of Lorraine—Aumont-Kelly	January
415 Lost Angel—O'Brien-Craig	January
417 Cry "Havoc"—Sullivan-Sothorn	February
422 Song of Russia—Taylor-Peters	February
490 Madame Curie—Garson-Pidgeon	February
416 A Guy Named Joe—Tracy-Dunne	March
418 Rationing—Beery-Main	March
419 Broadway Rhythm—Murphy-Simms	March
420 See Here, Private Hargrove	March
421 Heavenly Body—Powell-Lamarr	April
423 Swing Fever—Kay Kyser	April

Block 7

424 Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble—Rooney	not set
425 Gaslight—Boyer-Bergman-Cotten	not set
426 Meet the People—Ball-Powell	not set
427 Three Men in White—Barrymore	not set
428 Two Girls and a Sailor—James-Durante	not set

Special

466 Tunisian Victory—Documentary	April 28
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Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

303 Women in Bondage—Patrick-Kelly	Jan. 10
302 Where Are Your Children?—Storm-Cooper	Jan. 17
362 Westward Bound—Trail Blazers (54 m.)	Jan. 17
888 The Sultan's Daughter—Corio-Butterworth	Jan. 24
352 Raiders of the Border—J. M. Brown (53 m.)	Jan. 31
317 Charlie Chan in Secret Service—Toler	Feb. 14
318 Voodoo Man—Lugosi-Carradine	Feb. 21
311 Million Dollar Kid—East Side Kids	Feb. 28
321 Sweethearts of the U.S.A.—Merkel-Novis (re)	Mar. 18
363 Arizona Whirlwind—Trail Blazers (59 m.)	Mar. 18
353 Partners of the Trail—J. M. Brown (55 m.)	Apr. 1
301 Lady Let's Dance—Belita (reset)	Apr. 15
314 Hot Rhythm—Lowery-Drake (reset)	Apr. 22
364 Outlaw Trail—Trail Blazers	Apr. 29
354 Law Men—J. M. Brown	May 6
Detective Kitty O'Day—Jean Parker	May 13
320 The Chinese Cat—Sidney Toler	May 20

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 3

4311 Henry Aldrich, Boy Scout—Lydon	
4312 Miracle of Morgan's Creek—Hutton-Bracken	
4313 Timber Queen—Arlen-Hughes	
4314 Standing Room Only—Goddard-MacMurray	
4315 The Uninvited—Milland-Hussey	

Block 4

4316 The Navy Way—Lowery-Parker	
4317 The Hour Before the Dawn—Lake-Tone	
4318 You Can't Ration Love—Johnston-Rhodes	
(Going My Way" and "The Hitler Gang," originally included in Block 4, have been withdrawn.)	

Specials

4338 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman	
4336 Lady in the Dark—Rogers-Milland	
4337 The Story of Dr. Wassell—Cooper-Day	

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

- 403 Career Girl—Langford-NorrisJan. 11
 408 Nabonga—Crabbe-D'OrsayJan. 25
 454 Outlaw Roundup—Texas Rangers -
 No. 4 (55 m.)Feb. 10
 409 Men on Her Mind—Hughes-NorrisFeb. 12
 462 Frontier Outlaw—Crabbe No. 5 (58 m.)Mar. 4
 414 Lady in the Death House—Atwill-ParkerMar. 15
 463 Thundering Gun Slingers—
 Crabbe No. 5 (60 m.)Mar. 25
 413 The Amazing Mr. Forrest—Kruger-Horton
 (formerly "Gangsters' Den")Mar. 29
 455 Guns of the Law—Texas Rangers No. 5Apr. 10
 419 The Monster Maker—Naish-MorganApr. 15
 422 Shake Hands with Murder—Adrian-JenksApr. 22
 456 The Pinto Bandit—Texas Rangers No. 6Apr. 27
 404 Minstrel Man—Fields-GeorgeMay 10

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway New York 19, N. Y.)

- 9002 Women at War—Elsie Janis
 (reissue) (69 m.)Jan. 25
 333 Casanova in Burlesque—Brown-HavocFeb. 19
 3302 The Big Show—Autry (reissue) (71 m.)Mar. 1
 354 Beneath Western Skies—Livingston (56 m.)Mar. 3
 311 The Fighting Seabees—Wayne-Hayward
 (reset)Mar. 10
 377 The Mojave Firebrand—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.)Mar. 19
 312 My Best Gal—Withers-LydonMar. 28
 378 Hidden Valley Outlaws—Elliott-Hayes
 (56 m.)Apr. 2
 355 The Laramie Trail—Livingston (56 m.)Apr. 3
 366 Outlaws of Sante Fe—Don Barry (56 m.)Apr. 4
 313 Rosie, the Riveter—Frazee-AlbertsonApr. 9
 3303 Oh, Susanna—Autry (reissue)Apr. 15
 314 Trocadero—Lance-PurcellApr. 24
 316 Jamboree—Ruth TerryMay 5
 342 Cowboy and the Senorita—Roy Rogers
 (78 m.)May 12
 315 The Lady and the Monster—Von Stroheimnot set

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 3

- 411 Around the World—Kyser-Davis
 412 The Ghost Ship—Richard Dix
 413 Tarzan's Desert Mystery—Weissmuller-Kelly
 414 Rookies in Burma—Brown-Carney
 415 Higher and Higher—Sinatra-Haley-Morgan

Block 4

- 416 Tender Comrade—Rogers-Ryan
 417 Passport to Destiny—Lanchester-Oliver
 418 Curse of the Cat People—Simon-Smith
 419 Escape to Danger—Portman-Dvorak
 420 Action in Arabia—Sanders-Bruce
 Special
 451 The North Star—Baxter-Huston
 452 Up in Arms—Kaye-Andrews-Shore

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 6

- 417 The Lodger—Sanders-OberonJan. 7
 418 Uncensored—English CastJan. 21
 419 Lifeboat—Bankhead-BendixJan. 28

Block 7

- 420 Jane Eyre—Fontaine-WellesFeb.
 421 The Sullivans—Mitchell-BaxterFeb.

Block 8

- 422 The Purple Heart—Andrews-LeveneMar.
 423 Four Jills in a Jeep—Francis-Raye-LandisMar.

Block 9

- 424 Buffalo Bill—McCrea-O'HaraApr.
 425 Tampico—Robinson-BariApr.
 Shrine of Victory—DocumentaryApr.

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Three Russian Girls—Sten-SmithJan. 14
 Bridge of San Luis Rey—Bari-CalhernFeb. 11
 Texas Masquerade—Hopalong Cassidy (59 m.)Feb. 18
 Knickerbocker Holiday—Eddy-Coburn (reset)Mar. 17
 It Happened Tomorrow—Powell-Darnell, re)Apr. 7
 Voice in the Wind—Gurie-Lederer (re)Apr. 21
 Lumber Jack—Hopalong CassidyApr. 28
 Song of the Open Road—Bergen-O'Neillnot set
 Up in Mabel's Room—Patrick-O'Keefenot set
 Strange Confession—Sanders-Darnellnot set
 The Hairy Ape—Bendix-Haywardnot set

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 8034 Sing a Jingle—Allan JonesJan. 7
 8003 Ali Baba & the Forty Thieves—Montez-HallJan. 14
 8021 Spider Woman—Rathbone-SondergaardJan. 21
 8083 Marshal of Gunsmoke—Tex Ritter (58 m.)Jan. 21
 8014 Phantom Lady—Tone-RainesJan. 28
 8020 Swingtime Johnny—Andrews SistersFeb. 4
 8066 The Imposter—Gabin-WhorfFeb. 11
 8029 Weekend Pass—O'Driscoll-BeeryFeb. 18
 8011 Chip Off the Old Block—O'Connor-RyanFeb. 25
 8031 Hat Check Honey—McDonald-ErrolMar. 10
 8084 Oklahoma Raiders—Tex Ritter (57 m.)Mar. 17
 8065 Ladies Courageous—Young-FitzgeraldMar. 17
 8044 Hi, Good Lookin'—Marriet HilliardMar. 24
 Follow the Boys—All star castApr. 7
 8027 Weird Woman—Chaney-GwynneApr. 14
 8016 Her Primitive Man—Allbritton-PaigeApr. 21
 8037 Moon Over Las Vegas—Jean-BruceApr. 28
 8036 Slightly Terrific—Errol-RooneyMay 5
 Cobra Woman—Montez-HallMay 12
 Pardon My Rhythm—Jean-KnowlesMay 19

Warner-First National Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 309 Destination Tokyo—Grant-GarfieldJan. 1
 310 The Desert Song—Morgan-ManningJan. 29
 224 This is the Army—Murphy-LeslieFeb. 15
 311 In Our Time—Henreid-LupinoFeb. 19
 325 Frisco Kid—Cagney (reissue) (77 m.)Mar. 4
 312 Passage to Marseille—Bogart-RainsMar. 11
 313 Shine on Harvest Moon—Sheridan-MorganApr. 8
 Uncertain Glory—Flynn-LucasApr. 22

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE**Columbia—One Reel**

- 5704 Polly Wants a Doctor—Phantasies (6½ m.)Jan. 6
 5954 Film Vodvil No. 4 (9 m.)Jan. 7
 5805 Winged Targets—Sports (10 m.)Jan. 7
 5856 Screen Snapshots No. 6 (10 m.)Jan. 14
 5903 Camera Digest—Panoramic (10½ m.)Jan. 14
 5503 The Herring Murder Mystery—Color Rhap.
 (7 m.)Jan. 20
 5658 Community Sings No. 8 (10 m.)Jan. 28
 5705 Magic Strength—Phantasies (7½ min.)Feb. 4
 5857 Screen Snapshots No. 7 (9 min.)Feb. 18
 5806 Follow Through with Sam Byrd—Sports
 (9 m.)Feb. 18
 5659 Community Sings No. 9 (9½ m.)Feb. 25
 5601 Amoozin' But Confoozin'—Li'l Abner
 (reset) (8 m.)Mar. 3
 5706 Lionel Lion—Phantasies (6 m.)Mar. 3
 Why of Wartime Taxes—OWI (Free)
 (10 m.)Mar. 9
 5660 Community Sings No. 10 (10 min.)Mar. 17
 5858 Screen Snapshots No. 8 (8 m.)Mar. 24
 5753 The Dream Kids—Fox & Crow (re)Mar. 27
 5904 Senoritas and Traditions of Mexico—
 PanoramicMar. 30
 5807 Golden Gloves—Sports (reset)Mar. 31
 5707 Giddy-Yapping—PhantasiesApr. 7
 5955 Film Vodvil No. 5Apr. 7
 5859 Screen Snapshots No. 9Apr. 21
 5602 Sadie Hawkin's Day—Li'l Abner (reset)May 4
 5504 Disillusioned Bluebird—Color RhapsodyMay 26

Columbia—Two Reels

5431	To Heir is Human—Merkel (16 m.)	Jan. 14
5432	Dr. Feel My Pulse—Vera Vagne (18 m.)	Jan. 21
5166	Jungle Whispers—The Phantom (20 m.)	Jan. 21
5167	The Mystery Well—The Phantom (20 m.)	Jan. 28
5168	In Quest of the Keys—Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 4
5169	The Fire Princess—The Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 11
5170	The Emerald Key—The Phantom (20 m.)	Feb. 18
5434	His Tale is Told—Clyde (17½ m.)	Mar. 4
5405	Crash Goes the Hash—Stooges (17 m.)	Feb. 5
5433	Bachelor Daze—Summerville (18 m.)	Feb. 17
5171	The Fangs of the Beast—Phantom (20 m.)	Mar. 3
5173	A Lost City—The Phantom (20 m.)	Mar. 10
5174	Peace in the Jungle—Phantom (20 m.)	Mar. 17
5406	Busy Buddies—Stooges (16½ m.)	Mar. 18
5435	Defective Detectives—Lang-Brendel	Apr. 3
5411	Oh, Baby!—Hugh Herbert	Apr. 17

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel**1942-43**

W-456	Innertube Antics—Cartoon (7 m.)	Jan. 22
C-499	Radio Bugs—Our Gang (11 m.)	Apr. 1

(More to come)

1943-44

T-511	Through the Colorado Rockies—Traveltalk (10 m.)	Oct. 23
T-512	Grand Canyon, Pride of Creation—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Nov. 27
M-581	My Tomato—Miniature (7 m.)	Dec. 4
M-583	No News is Good News—Miniature (9m)	Dec. 18
M-582	Kid in Upper Four—Miniature (11 m.)	Dec. 25
T-513	Salt Lake Diversions—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Dec. 25
S-551	Practical Joker—Pete Smith (11 m.)	Jan. 8
T-514	A Day in Death Valley—Traveltalk (10 m.)	Jan. 22
T-515	Visiting in St. Louis—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Feb. 19
S-552	Home Maid—Pete Smith (9 m.)	Feb. 19
W-531	Zoot Cat—Cartoon (7 m.)	Feb. 26
T-516	Mackinac Island—Traveltalk (9 m.)	Mar. 18
W-532	Screwball Squirrel—Cartoon (7 m.)	Apr. 1
S-553	Groovie Movie—Pete Smith (9 m.)	Apr. 8
W-533	Batty Baseball—Cartoon	Apr. 22

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels**1942-43**

A-403	Shoe Shine Boy—Special (15 m.)	Dec. 25
A-404	Main Street Today—Special (20 m.)	Mar. 25

(More to come)

1943-44

X-510	Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.)	Jan. 1
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Paramount—One Reel

L3-2	Unusual Occupations No. 2 (10 m.)	Jan. 7
R3-4	Swimcapades—Sportlight (9 m.)	Jan. 14
U3-3	Package for Jasper—Mad. Mod. (8 m.)	Jan. 21
Y3-2	In Winter Quarters—Speak. of Animals (9m)	Jan. 28
D3-1	Eggs Don't Bounce—Little Lulu (8 m.)	Jan. 28
J3-3	Popular Science No. 3 (10 m.)	Feb. 4
R3-5	Open Fire—Sportlight (9 m.)	Feb. 18
P3-2	Henpecked Rooster—Noveltoons (8 m.)	Feb. 18
D3-2	Hullaba Lulu—Little Lulu (8 m.)	Feb. 25
L3-3	Unusual Occupations No. 3	Mar. 3
U3-4	Say Ah, Jasper—Mad. Mod. (8 m.)	Mar. 10
Y3-3	In the Newsreels—Speak. of Animals	Mar. 17
R3-6	Heroes on the Mend—Sportlight	Mar. 24
P3-3	Cilly Goose—Noveltoons	Mar. 24
D3-3	Lulu Gets Her Birdie—Little Lulu	Mar. 31
J3-4	Popular Science No. 4	Apr. 17
E3-3	We're on Our Way to Reno—Popeye	Apr. 21
P3-4	Suddenly It's Spring—Noveltoons	Apr. 28
R3-7	Catch 'Em & Eat 'Em—Sportlight	Apr. 28

Paramount—Two Reels

FF3-1	Mardi Gras—Musical Parade (20 m.)	Oct. 1
FF3-2	Caribbean Romance—Musical Parade (20m)	Dec. 17
FF3-3	Lucky Cowboy—Musical Parade (20 m.)	Feb. 11
FF3-4	Showboat Serenade—Musical Parade (20m)	Apr. 14

RKO—One Reel**1942-43**

34114	Trombone Trouble—Disney (7 m.)	Feb. 18
34115	How to Play Golf—Disney (8 m.)	Mar. 10
34116	Donald Duck & the Gorilla—Disney	Mar. 31
34117	Columbia Candor—Disney	Apr. 21
34118	Commando Duck—Disney	May 12

(End of 1942-43 Season)

1943-44

44201	Flicker Flashbacks No. 1 (9 m.)	Sept. 5
44301	Field Trial Champions—Sportscope (9m)	Sept. 10
44202	Flicker Flashbacks No. 2 (9 m.)	Oct. 1
44302	Joe Kirkwood—Sportscope (9 m.)	Oct. 8
44203	Flicker Flashbacks No. 3 (9 m.)	Oct. 29
44303	Stars and Strikes—Sportscope (9 m.)	Nov. 5
44204	Flicker Flashbacks No. 4 (9 m.)	Nov. 26
44304	Mountain Anglers—Sportscope (9 m.)	Dec. 3
44205	Flicker Flashbacks No. 5 (9 m.)	Dec. 24
44305	Co-ed Sports—Sportscope (8 m.)	Dec. 31
44206	Flicker Flashbacks No. 6 (9 m.)	Jan. 21
44306	Basket Wizards Sportscope (8 m.)	Jan. 28
44207	Flicker Flashbacks No. 7 (10 m.)	Feb. 18
44307	Mallard Flight—Sportscope (9 m.)	Feb. 25
44308	On Paint—Sportscope (8 m.)	Mar. 24

RKO—Two Reels

43043	Prunes & Politics—Edgar Kennedy (16 m.)	Jan. 7
43103	New Prisons—New Men—This is America (17 m.)	Jan. 14
43104	Mail Call—This is America (17 m.)	Feb. 11
43704	Say Uncle—Leon Errol (18 m.)	Feb. 18
43404	Love Your Landlord—Edgar Kennedy (18 m.)	Mar. 3
43105	News Front—This is America (16 m.)	Mar. 10

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

4155	Realm of Royalty—Magic Carpet (9 m.)	Feb. 4
4511	The Wreck of the Hesperus—Terry. (7 m.)	Feb. 11
4202	Silver Wings—Adventure (9 m.)	Feb. 18
4512	A Day in June—Terrytoon (7 m.)	Mar. 3
4153	Steamboat on the River—Magic Carpet	Mar. 10
4201	Sails Aloft—Adventure (9 m.)	Mar. 31
4514	The Frog & the Princess—Terry. (7 m.)	Apr. 7
4513	The Champion of Justice—Terrytoon (7 m.)	Mar. 17
4303	Fun for All—Sports	Apr. 14
4515	Mighty Mouse Meets Jekyll & Hyde Cat—Terrytoon (6 m.)	Apr. 28
4203	Mailman of Hell's Canyon—Adventure	May 5
4516	My Boy, Johnny—Terrytoon	May 12
4351	Nymph of the Southland—Sports	May 26

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

Vol. 10 No. 5	Upbeats in Music—March of Time (18 m.)	Dec. 31
Vol. 10 No. 6	Sweden's Middle Road—March of Time (18 m.)	Jan. 28
Vol. 10 No. 7	Post War Jobs?—March of Time (18 m.)	Feb. 25
Vol. 10 No. 8	South American Front—March of Time (18 m.)	Mar. 24

Universal—One Reel

8355	Amazing Metropolis—Var. Views (9 m.)	Jan. 17
8356	Magazine Model—Var. Views (9 m.)	Jan. 24
8375	Mrs. Lowell Thomas, Fur Farmer—Personal Oddities (9 m.)	Jan. 31
8357	Animal Tricks—Var. Views (9 m.)	Feb. 21
8376	The Barefoot Judge—Per. Odd. (9 m.)	Feb. 28
8377	Aviation Expert—Per. Odd. (9 m.)	Mar. 20
8232	The Greatest Man in Siam—Swing Symphony (7 m.)	Mar. 27
8358	Hobo News—Var. Views (9 m.)	Mar. 27
8238	Barber of Seville—Cartune (7 m.)	Apr. 10
8378	Foster's Canary College—Per. Odd. (9 m.)	Apr. 24
8359	Fraud by Mail—Var. Views (9 m.)	Apr. 24

Universal—Two Reels

8125	New Orleans Blues—Musical (15 m.)	Jan. 26
8126	Sweet Swing—Musical (15 m.)	Feb. 23
8112	With the Marines at Tarawa (Special) (19 m.)	Mar. 1
8127	Fellow on a Furlough—Musical (15 m.)	Mar. 29
8881	Shipwrecked Among the Icebergs—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 1 (20 m.)	Apr. 25
8128	Stars and Violins—Musical (15 m.)	Apr. 26
8882	Thundering Doom—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 2 (20 m.)	May 2
8883	Battle in the Clouds—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 3 (20 m.)	May 9
8884	Masked Murder—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 4 (20 m.)	May 16
8129	Melody Garden—Musical (15 m.)	May 17
8885	The Bridge of Disaster—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 4 (20 m.)	May 23

Vitaphone—One Reel

9503	Into the Clouds—Sports (10 m.)	Jan. 1
9305	Cross Country Detours—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)	Jan. 15
9403	Hunting the Devil Cat—Varieties (reset) (10 m.)	Jan. 22
9504	Baa Baa Blacksheep—Sports (10 m.)	Jan. 22
9701	Meatless Fly Day—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Jan. 29
9605	Ted Weems Merchant Marine Band— Mel. Mas. (10 m.)	Jan. 29
9306	Hiawatha's Rabbit Hunt—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)	Feb. 12
9702	Tom Turk & Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Feb. 12
9505	Dogie Roundup—Sports (10 m.)	Feb. 26
9721	The Three Bears—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Feb. 26
9404	Struggle for Life—Varieties (10 m.)	Mar. 4
9703	I've Got Plenty of Mutton—Mer. Mel. (7m.)	Mar. 11
9307	The Bear's Tale—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7m.)	Mar. 11
9607	South American Sway—Mel. Mas. (10 m.)	Mar. 18
9506	Chinatown Champs—Sports (10 m.)	Mar. 18
9704	The Weakly Reporter—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Mar. 25
9705	Tick Tock Tuckered—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Apr. 8
9308	Sweet Sioux—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)	Apr. 8
9722	Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips—Mer. Mel.	
9405	Jungle Thrills—Varieties (10 m.)	Apr. 15
9608	Rudy Vallee's Coast Guard Band—Mel. Mass. (10 m.)	Apr. 15
	(7 m.)	Apr. 22
9507	Backyard Golf—Sports (10 m.)	Apr. 22
9706	The Swooner Crooner—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	May 6
9508	Philippine Sports Parade—Sports (10 m.)	May 13
9309	Of Fox & Hounds—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)	May 13
9707	Russian Rhapsody—Mel. Mas. (7 m.)	May 20

Vitaphone—Two Reels

9109	Gun to Gun—Sante Fe Western (20 m.)	Jan. 8
9103	Grandfather's Follies—Featurette (20 m.)	Feb. 5
9110	Roaring Guns—Sante Fe Western (20 m.)	Feb. 19
9105	Nights in Mexico City—Featurette (20 m.)	Mar. 25
9111	Wells Fargo Days—Sante Fe Western (20m.)	Apr. 1
9005	Winners Circle—Special (20 m.) (reset)	May 6
9104	Our Frontier in Italy—Featurette (reset) (20 m.)	Apr. 29
9004	Devil Boats—Special (20 min.)	May 27

**NEWSWEEKLY
NEW YORK
RELEASE DATES****Pathe News**

45163	Sat. (O)	Apr. 1
45264	Wed. (E)	Apr. 5
45165	Sat. (O)	Apr. 8
45266	Wed. (E)	Apr. 12
45167	Sat. (O)	Apr. 15
45268	Wed. (E)	Apr. 19
45169	Sat. (O)	Apr. 22
45270	Wed. (E)	Apr. 26
45171	Sat. (O)	Apr. 29
45272	Wed. (E)	May 3
45173	Sat. (O)	May 6
45274	Wed. (E)	May 10
45175	Sat. (O)	May 13

Fox Movietone

61	Tues. (O)	Apr. 4
62	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 6
63	Tues. (O)	Apr. 11
64	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 13
65	Tues. (O)	Apr. 18
66	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 20
67	Tues. (O)	Apr. 25
68	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 27
69	Tues. (O)	May 2
70	Thurs. (E)	May 4
71	Tues. (O)	May 9
72	Thurs. (E)	May 11
73	Tues. (O)	May 16

Universal

280	Fri. (E)	Mar. 31
281	Wed. (O)	Apr. 5
282	Fri. (E)	Apr. 7
283	Wed. (O)	Apr. 12
284	Fri. (E)	Apr. 14
285	Wed. (O)	Apr. 19
286	Fri. (E)	Apr. 21
287	Wed. (O)	Apr. 26
288	Fri. (E)	Apr. 28
289	Wed. (O)	May 5
290	Fri. (E)	May 7
291	Wed. (O)	May 12

Metrotone News

259	Tues. (O)	Apr. 4
260	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 6
261	Tues. (O)	Apr. 11
262	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 13
263	Tues. (O)	Apr. 18
264	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 20
265	Tues. (O)	Apr. 25
266	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 25
267	Tues. (O)	May 2
268	Thurs. (E)	May 4
269	Tues. (O)	May 9
270	Thurs. (E)	May 11
271	Tues. (O)	May 16

Paramount News

61	Sunday (O)	Apr. 2
62	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 6
63	Sunday (O)	Apr. 9
64	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 13
65	Sunday (O)	Apr. 16
66	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 20
67	Sunday (O)	Apr. 23
68	Thurs. (E)	Apr. 27
69	Sunday (O)	Apr. 30
70	Thurs. (E)	May 4
71	Sunday (O)	May 7
72	Thurs. (E)	May 11
73	Sunday (O)	May 14

All American News

75	Friday	Mar. 31
76	Friday	Apr. 7
77	Friday	Apr. 14
78	Friday	Apr. 21
79	Friday	Apr. 28
80	Friday	May 5
81	Friday	May 12

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SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1944

No. 15

LET US GIVE PARAMOUNT CREDIT

The fourth Paramount block of pictures was originally intended to consist of four pictures, "Going My Way," with Bing Crosby; "The Hour Before the Dawn," with Veronica Lake and Franchot Tone; "You Can't Ration Love," with Betty Rhodes and Johnny Johnston; and "The Navy Way," with Jean Parker and Robert Lowery.

Immediately after the trade showing of the Bing Crosby picture, Paramount announced its withdrawal from the block intending to substitute "The Hitler Gang" for it. But now it has announced that it has withdrawn from the block also "The Hitler Gang." According to information HARRISON'S REPORTS has obtained from Paramount, the intention is to let the fourth block consist of only the aforementioned three pictures.

I have no proof of what I am going to say, but I have a notion that Paramount, in letting the block stand with three pictures, wanted to be fair to the exhibitors by not wishing to impose on them more than three mediocre pictures at one time. Had it included "The Hitler Gang," the number of mediocre pictures would then be four. And such a number would have been too great a burden for the exhibitors to bear at one time.

I have not yet seen "The Hitler Gang," because it has not been shown to the reviewers in this territory, but the March 27 bulletin of the Independent Exhibitors Forum (formerly the Indignant Exhibitors Forum), of Cincinnati, classes this picture in its Allocations Chart as an "E" picture, that is, a picture deserving less than average terms in suburban and subsequent runs. Since this group of exhibitors have always been fair in their allocations of the different distributors' pictures, HARRISON'S REPORTS feels certain that they would not have had this picture so allocated unless the organization's committee, consisting of five representative exhibitors, had seen it. The fact that the picture will be shown at the Globe Theater, this city, as a first run upholds their judgment.

The following are the allocations that they give to the three remaining pictures of the fourth block for suburban and subsequent runs:

"The Hour Before the Dawn" "D" or "Average Terms."

"You Can't Ration Love" "E" or "Average-Minus Terms."

"The Navy Way" "E" or "Average-Minus Terms."

I presume that the reason why the committee put "The Hour Before the Dawn" in the "D" class instead of the "E" is owed to the fact that it has two pretty popular stars, Veronica Lake and Franchot

Tone; otherwise the picture, as entertainment, belongs to the "E" or "Minus-Average" terms, class.

Again HARRISON'S REPORTS wishes to commend Paramount for its fairmindedness.

WARNER BROTHERS HEADED FOR A FREE FRENCH PROTEST

In the Warner Bros., picture, "Uncertain Glory," a group of underground Frenchmen in a village near Paris plot to deliver to the Gestapo the hero, who they know is innocent of sabotage, so as to save one hundred French hostages, among whom are the relatives of the plotters.

The incident is, indeed, in bad taste and the country cannot escape receiving a strong protest against it from Free French representatives.

This paper fears that, unless this incident is eliminated, the picture may be barred from export in the event that the Free French protested.

In any case the incident is one of the most unpleasant in the entire picture.

ANOTHER ABUSE DEALT WITH BY THE CINCINNATI FORUM

In its March 7 bulletin, the Independent (Formerly "Indignant") Exhibitors Forum discusses another distributor action that has the tendency of taking away the profits of the independent exhibitors,—by the curtailment of product, either by producing fewer pictures, or by postponing releases, forcing longer runs for their more meritorious pictures.

When the distributors postpone the release of their good pictures, they put program pictures into percentage brackets and up their allocations all along the line to the point that the profits are taken out of the week's business. Things become worse, states the bulletin, when the exhibitor has a bad break in the weather during the entire week. Then he finds himself in the red, and has no way by which he could make up his losses in subsequent weeks.

LET PERCENTAGE PICTURES BE SOLD BY THEMSELVES

There is a growing demand among independent exhibitors that percentage pictures be sold alone, and not tied up with flat rental pictures.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is inclined to agree with these exhibitors out of a belief that the prices exhibitors pay for flat rental pictures are far higher than they are worth when they are tied up with percentage pictures. If you disagree with this view, you can render a service to the industry by writing to this paper, giving the reasons for your disagreement. A full discussion of the subject may lead to a new and equitable policy governing the sale of these two types of pictures.

"Detective Kitty O'Day" with Jean Parker and Peter Cookson

(Monogram, May 13; time, 61 min.)

This murder-mystery melodrama is fairly good program entertainment. Combining mystery and comedy, with the accent on the comedy, the action moves swiftly; it revolves around a young woman who sets out to solve a murder in order to clear herself and her sweetheart of suspicion. Jean Parker, as the self-appointed female detective does rather well. She provokes considerable laughter by her antics, and displays ability as a comedienne, a role new to her. The dialogue is, on occasion, bright. Although discriminating audiences may find the story a bit too silly, it should please audiences in small-town and neighborhood theatres:—

Jean Parker and Peter Cookson, sweethearts, are unaware that their employer was a dealer in stolen bonds, and that he was in league with Herbert Heyes, his attorney; Douglas Fowley, his wife's (Veda Ann Borg) boy-friend; and Olaf Hytten, his butler. One night, Jean discovers her employer murdered. Inspector Tim Ryan, and Ed Gargan, his assistant, are assigned to the case. Because she and Cookson were among those suspected of the crime, Jean determines to prove their innocence. In their search for clues, the pair disguise themselves as maid and porter, and gain entry to the neighboring apartments of Veda's and of Fowley's; Jean felt that they were responsible for the murder. Their presence is discovered and, after a hectic game of hide-and-seek with the police, both are caught. During the chase, both Fowley and the butler are murdered mysteriously, and the young lovers are accused of the crimes. Outwitting the police, Jean and Cookson escape and go to Heyes, the attorney, for advice. Jean, while talking to Heyes, discovers evidence that reveals him to be the murderer. Unmasked, Heyes forces the couple to accompany him in a taxicab to a remote part of town, where he demands that they turn over to him \$100,000 in bonds, which he accuses them of having stolen from Fowley's apartment. Both are saved by the timely arrival of the police, who had been summoned by the taxicab driver. Ryan proves that Heyes had killed his former partners because of a dispute over the profits. The bonds, which had been found and hidden by Cookson, are recovered.

Tim Ryan and Victor Hammond wrote the screen play, Lindsley Parsons produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. Morally suitable for all.

"Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble" with Mickey Rooney, Bonita Granville and Herbert Marshall

(MGM, no release date set; time, 107 min.)

This picture makes one feel as if MGM is having difficulty finding suitable material with which to continue the "Hardy family" pictures, for its entertainment value is decidedly below par for the series. This time the story deals with Mickey Rooney's misadventures at college, particularly his troubles with a set of identical twin sisters, whom he cannot tell apart. There are a few amusing situations, and some heart interest, but on the whole it fails to hold one's attention, for the action is slow. Its 107 minutes running time is much too long for a picture of its type. Some judicious cutting should help to speed up the action. This could be done by taking out a number of family scenes that have no relation to the main plot and add nothing to the entertainment values:—

Bound for Wainright College, where his father (Lewis Stone) had been a famous student, Mickey Rooney determines to make good on his own. On the train he meets Bonita Granville, a co-ed, and Herbert Marshall, the college dean. Mickey becomes disturbed when he notices that Bonita is attracted to Marshall. Trouble comes Mickey's way when he makes the acquaintance of Lee Wilde, a striking blonde, who induces him to let her hold his money, because freshmen were not allowed to carry more than five dollars on their person. Unknown to Mickey, Lee had a twin sister (Lyn Wilde), and both were masquerading as

one because their father had decided to separate them by sending the serious-minded Lyn to college, and the flirtatious Lee so visit an aunt. They refused to separate and, to avoid discovery, agreed not to appear in public together. As a result of his not knowing that he was dealing with twin sisters, Mickey gets himself into numerous predicaments while at college, and his attempts to romance with Bonita are interfered with, causing her to become even more infatuated with Marshall. Mickey eventually learns the twins' secret and, in an attempt to help them, gets himself into trouble with Marshall. Rather than expose the twins, he decides to quit the college. Before he can do so, however, his father arrives for a visit and clears up matters with Marshall, his old school chum. Bonita, realizing that she has been going through an "older man" stage, forgets her infatuation for Marshall and reconciles with Mickey. Meanwhile Mickey's efforts in behalf of the twins turns out for the best when their father agrees to let them go to college together.

Harry Ruskin William Ludwig, and Agnes Christine Johnston wrote the screen play, and George B. Seitz directed it. The cast includes Fay Holden, Sara Haden, Keye Luke and others.

"Meet the People" with Lucille Ball and Dick Powell

(MGM, no release date set; time, 100 min.)

Just fair. It never rises much above the level of program entertainment, and it will have to depend for its box-office success on the drawing power of the stars. The production, which might be termed a defense-plant musical, is weighed down by a story that offers little in the way of originality, and its treatment is so unimaginative that it barely holds one's interest. The most satisfying parts are the specialty numbers and the musical sequences, which are pleasant but not exceptional. The best of these is a musical satire of Hitler and Mussolini by Spike Jones and his City Slickers, in which a monkey impersonates Hitler. The monkey is excellent. There is some amusing clowning on the part of Bert Lahr, and a few good impersonations of famous people by Paul Regan, a newcomer. Vaughn Monroe and his orchestra furnish the music:—

Dick Powell, a shipyard worker, wins a date with Lucille Ball, a musical comedy star, for selling the most war bonds in a contest. Lucille finds herself attracted to Powell, and becomes interested in a play that he and his cousin, a Marine on Guadalcanal, had written about defense plant workers. She takes the play to New York and persuades a Broadway impresario to produce it. Powell goes to New York to watch the rehearsals and, to his horror, finds that the play's meaning had been distorted. He takes the play away from Lucille, and tells her that she ought to meet the workers before trying to put it on. Lucille, accepting his challenge, becomes a welder at the shipyard. Impressed with her sincerity, Powell falls in love with her and eventually agrees to let her stage the play. But when he discovers her posing for newspaper photographers, and believes that she had become a welder for publicity purposes, he withdraws his permission. Lucille prepares to return to New York, but complications arise when an official government order freezes her to her job. She makes the best of her predicament by becoming the shipyard's entertainment director. Learning that his cousin was returning from Guadalcanal, wounded, and that he believed the play had been produced, Powell goes to Lucille and asks her to put on the play as part of a launching celebration. Lucille, to get back at him, refuses. Later, however, when she learns the reason for his request, she throws herself wholeheartedly into the project, and stages the play with talent recruited from among the shipyard workers.

S. M. Herzog and Fred Saidy wrote the screen play, E. Y. Harburg produced it, and Charles Reisner directed it. The cast includes "Rags" Raglund, Virginia O'Brien, June Allyson, Steve Geray, Howard Freeman, Mata and Hari and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Uncertain Glory" with Errol Flynn and Paul Lukas

(Warner Bros., April 22; time, 102 min.)

A fairly interesting but somewhat "overlong" war melodrama. From a box-office standpoint it should do good business because of the popularity of Errol Flynn, and of Paul Lukas, this year's Academy Award winner. The story, which takes place in Nazi-controlled France, is a rather involved affair, in which coincidence plays a big part, and it is somewhat unpleasant. It revolves around a convicted murderer, who, faced with execution on the guillotine, voluntarily makes a deal with a French detective to pay his debt to society by posing as a saboteur in order to save the lives of one hundred Frenchmen held by the Gestapo as hostages for the wreck of a Nazi troop train. The unpleasantness stems from the fact that the criminal is not motivated by a desire to save others, but by a desire to prolong his freedom. Towards the finish, however, he becomes regenerated because of his love for a young village girl. Unlike most pictures starring Errol Flynn, this one is sorely lacking in excitement; at times the action becomes quite tedious. It does manage, however, to maintain an undercurrent of suspense. The opening scenes, in which an air bombardment halts the criminal's execution and enables him to escape, are identical with those of Universal's "The Imposter":—

While being led to the guillotine, Errol Flynn, a convicted murderer, escapes during an air raid. He goes to Sheldon Leonard, a former accomplice, and intimidates him into providing him with funds and travel papers. Flynn entrains for Spain, accompanied by Faye Emerson, Sheldon's girl, to whom he had made love. Enraged, Leonard reveals Flynn's whereabouts to Paul Lukas, of the French Surete. Lukas apprehends Flynn. En route to Paris, they learn that a saboteur had blown up a bridge, and that the Gestapo had seized one hundred Frenchmen, who were to be executed unless the saboteur was found within five days. Arguing that he must die anyway, Flynn persuades Lukas to allow him to pose as the saboteur in order to save the hostages. Informing headquarters that Flynn had drowned in an attempted escape, and that his body had disappeared, Lukas takes the criminal to a village near the blasted bridge to study the sabotage, so that he will have a letter-perfect story for the Gestapo. Fate brings them together with the real saboteur, who reveals to them just how the bridge was blasted. Flynn makes the most of his few days of freedom, falling in love with Jean Sullivan, a village girl. When Jean overhears a group of villagers plotting to charge Flynn with the sabotage, in order to save their relatives, who were among the hostages, she warns him and guides him out of town. Lukas, believing that Flynn had escaped him, returns to Paris. Realizing that Jean could never find happiness with him, Flynn keeps his bargain with Lukas, and gives himself up to the Gestapo.

Laszlo Vaday and Max Brand wrote the screen play, Robert Buckner produced it, and Raoul Walsh directed it. The cast includes Douglas Dumbrille, Odette Myrtil, Lucille Watson and others.

Adult entertainment.

"Trocadero" with Rosemary Lane, Johnny Downs and Ralph Morgan

(Republic, April 24; time, 74 min.)

Presumably the story of the "Trocadero," Hollywood's famous night-club, this is a fairly good program musical entertainment. As is the case with most pictures of this type, the story is nothing to brag about, for it follows a tried and true formula, but it is pleasant and one feels kindly towards the characters. What it lacks in story values, however, it more than makes up for in tuneful music, played by the orchestras of Bob Chester, Matty Malneck, Gus Arnheim, and Eddie LeBaron. In addition, there are entertaining specialty numbers by Rosemary Lane and Johnny Downs, the Radio Rogues, Cliff Nazario and others. It is the sort of picture that will send your patrons out humming, and this

is more than can be said for many musicals produced by the major companies:—

With the repeal of prohibition, Tony Rocado (Charles Calvert) plans to turn his restaurant into a smart night-club to be managed by Rosemary Lane and Johnny Downs, his step-children, who were attending college. Soon after, Tony is accidentally killed. With only enough money for one of them to go through college, Rosemary leaves school to manage the club, while Downs continues his education. Things go badly for the club until Sheldon Leonard, a theatrical agent, convinces Rosemary and Ralph Morgan, her manager, that a "swing" band would help them out of the red. Rosemary employs Dick Purcell's orchestra, and their new type of music creates a sensation, making the club a huge success and enabling Rosemary to build a new club, which she names the "Trocadero." Meanwhile Downs, having fallen in love with Marjorie Manners, a society girl, who was contemptuous of night-club owners, is influenced by her to leave Rosemary. To add to Rosemary's misery, Purcell, with whom she was in love, leaves her after a quarrel. Downs soon comes to the realization that he was not cut out for dull society life, leaves Marjorie, and returns to the club. Rosemary's happiness is complete when Purcell, too, comes back to her, and Marjorie, changing her views, effects a reconciliation with Downs.

Allen Gale wrote the screen play, Walter Colmes produced it, and William Nigh directed it. The cast includes Erskine Johnson, Emmett Vogan, Wingy Mannone, The Stardusters, Ida James, Dave Fleischer and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Weird Woman" with Lon Chaney, Anne Gwynne and Evelyn Ankers

(Universal, April 14; time, 63 min.)

A minor program mystery melodrama, of the psychological sort. The story, which revolves around a young bride's belief in voodooism and around the efforts of a jealous woman to discredit her by employing tactics that play upon her superstitious beliefs, is far-fetched and lacks excitement. Discriminating audiences will find it tiresome, and even the most ardent followers of this type of entertainment may find it but mildly interesting. Moreover, it is a slow-moving, moody entertainment, with little comedy to relieve the tension. No fault can be found with the individual performances:—

Lon Chaney, a young sociology professor, returns to Monroe College with Anne Gwynne, his bride, whom he had met and married on a tropical island. From early childhood, Anne had been raised by a native tribe, and she had become steeped in superstitious beliefs. Chaney's return with an attractive bride arouses the jealousy of Evelyn Ankers, college librarian, who loved him. She initiates a campaign to discredit Anne and Chaney, employing devices that play upon Anne's superstitious beliefs, thus confusing Chaney, who was trying to rid Anne of her fears. Informing professor Ralph Morgan that she had proof that would discredit him as the author of a book on sociology, Evelyn drives the man to distraction and causes him to commit suicide. She sees to it that the indirect blame for Morgan's death falls on Chaney. Her efforts to hurt Chaney continue when she leads Phil Brown, a student, to believe that Chaney had been making love to his girl-friend (Lois Collier). His jealousy aroused, the young man attempts to shoot Chaney and, in the scuffle, accidentally shoots himself. Chaney eventually comes upon a clue that leads him to suspect Evelyn of the inexplicable series of tragedies. Employing Evelyn's own devices of superstition and fear, he sets a trap for her. The young woman's distorted mind and guilty conscience succumb to the trap. She admits her guilt, and, in an attempted escape, strangles to death when her neck gets caught in a grapevine.

Brenda Weisberg wrote the screen play, Oliver Drake produced it, and Reginald Le Borg directed it. The cast includes Elizabeth Risdon, Elizabeth Russell and others.

Morally suitable for all.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ROUSING PUBLIC INTEREST RESTS WITH THE DISTRIBUTORS

Recently Maurice A. Bergman, Universal's Eastern advertising-publicity director, made a speech before the Association of Motion Picture Advertisers, by which he criticized the exhibitor, in a friendly manner, for having failed: (1) To institutionalize his theatre; (2) to make advertising refreshing; (3) to break away from conventions; (4) to spend enough money (5) to have a long-range view.

To me, Mr. Bergman's criticism of the independent exhibitors in failing to do what he has pointed out is, in the main, as logical as it would be if he had accused them of having failed to prescribe the right kind of medicine for themselves when they become sick; or of having failed to perform an operation on an infected part of their bodies so as to effect a cure.

Advertising is an art, and it is learned in schools or in the school of experience after working at it for many years. For an exhibitor to become an accomplished advertising man while operating his theatre is out of the question. The responsibility, therefore, of providing an exhibitor with means by which he could arouse the greatest public interest in a picture so as to get out of it the most money possible rests with the advertising and publicity talent of the producer-distributors themselves. It is they who should prepare the right kind of ads and guide the exhibitors in the exploitation of pictures.

"Moon Over Las Vegas" with Anne Gwynne and David Bruce

(Universal, April 28; time, 70 min.)

A moderately entertaining comedy with music, suitable as a filler on a mid-week double bill. The story, which has been given a farcical treatment, presents nothing novel, is lacking in human interest, and at times is quite silly, resorting to forced slapstick situations for the laughter. One does not feel sympathy for any of the characters since they behave in a stupid manner. A few of the situations are amusing, but for the most part they provoke no more than a grin. Except for a few well known tunes, the music fails to click:—

Unable to make a go of their marriage, Anne Gwynne and David Bruce agree to separate. Vera Vague, Anne's aunt, advises her to win Bruce back by making him jealous. Bruce receives similar advice from Addison Richards, the judge in domestic relations court. To arouse Bruce, Anne leaves for Las Vegas, the home of Milburn Stone, a divorce lawyer, who had been her girlhood sweetheart. Bruce boards the same train. En route, he is thrown into a series of embarrassing situations when he endeavors to aid Vivian Austin, a striking brunette bound for a Las Vegas divorce, who had lost her train ticket. Anne misunderstands and determines to obtain a divorce when she reaches Las Vegas. Arriving there, all go to live at a gambling resort operated by Alan Dinehart, who offers Anne a position when Vera loses all their money at the gaming tables. Bruce, who, too, was short of funds, asks Dinehart for a job as a casino dealer. Learning that Dinehart employs only single women and married men, Anne tells him that she is not married, and Bruce, to meet the requirements, persuades Vivian to act as his wife. All meet at Dinehart's home to learn how to operate the gaming tables. Complications develop when Dinehart insists that they remain overnight, and assigns one room to Vivian

and Bruce. To add to the confusion, Lee Patrick, Dinehart's wife, returns home unexpectedly and becomes irked when she finds Dinehart alone with Anne. She determines to divorce him. Bruce's troubles increase when Joe Sawyer, Vivian's strapping husband, arrives. It all comes to a happy end when Stone, the divorce lawyer, brings the couples together at his home and scares them into each other's arms by unleashing a pet gorilla.

George Jeske and Clyde Bruckman wrote the screen play, and Jean Yarbrough produced and directed it. The cast includes Mantan Moreland, Gene Austin and Sherrel Sisters, Connie Haines, Cappelia and Patricia, The Sportsmen and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Her Primitive Man" with Louise Allbritton and Robert Paige

(Universal, April 21; time, 80 min.)

In spite of the fact that the story is a hodge-podge of nonsense, based on the mistaken identity theme, this program comedy should prove entertaining to the masses, for there are complications, made laughable by the absurd but amusing antics of the leading players. In crowded houses, the laughter should be quite hearty. One of the most comical sequences is the one in which Robert Paige, posing as a ferocious head-hunter in jungle garb, goes berserk in a fashionable New York hotel, frightening the guests out of their wits. Some of the other situations are so ludicrous that one cannot help laughing at them. Edward Everett Horton and Robert Benchley add to the fun:—

With the aid of Edward Everett Horton, a bartender in a Havana gambling casino, Robert Paige, an author, writes a book about his imaginary experiences among the Lupari head-hunters. The book makes such exciting reading that Robert Benchley, his publisher, who believed it, asks Louise Allbritton, an anthropologist, to endorse it. Louise brands Paige's book a fake, and threatens to expose it if published. She decides to go to Cuba to the Lupari jungle, find a primitive man, and bring him back to New York; she wanted to write a book about his reactions to civilization. In Havana, she meets Paige, who, upon learning of the purpose of her trip, goes to the jungle and disguises himself as a savage warrior. Horton, who was in league with Paige, guides Louise through the jungle and influences her to accept Paige as a primitive man. Returning to New York, Louise is compelled to take the "primitive" man to a hotel when her socially prominent family objects to her bringing him into their home. Paige deliberately creates a panic in the hotel, compelling Louise to take him to her home, despite her family's protests. Paige's scheme is interfered with when Stephanie Bachelor, a wealthy society girl, whose love he did not return, visits Louise's home. Stephanie suspects the disguise and tries to trap Paige, but he manages to allay her suspicions by changing clothes quickly and showing up as himself. Eventually Louise finds herself attracted to Paige both as himself and as a primitive man. Paige, too, falls in love. After a series of incidents, in which Paige is ultimately faced with exposure, he imports a real savage to save Louise's reputation as an anthropologist, and admits to her that it had been a hoax. Both fall into each other's arms.

Michael Fessier and Ernest Pagano wrote the screen play and produced it. Charles Lamont directed it. The cast includes Helen Broderick, Ernest Truex and others. Morally suitable for all.

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DYNAMITE!

Unless the consent decree makes it impossible for the distributors to continue their obnoxious practices in the selling of their film, the Independent Theatres Owners Association, of which Harry Brandt is president, and Milton Weisman general counsel, intends to introduce at the next session of the New York State Legislature an amendment to the New York General Business Law, calling for a film commission, or board, that will be endowed with drastic regulatory powers.

If any member of the industry has ever thought that the provisions of the Neely Bill were drastic he has a surprise coming, for Section 340-D of the proposed amendment to the General Business Law provides that it shall be an unfair method of competition for either a producer or a distributor to resort to the following practices:

(1) To coerce an exhibitor into paying higher film rentals by threatening to build or acquire a competitive theatre.

(2) To interfere with the licensing of his own pictures, or to influence the licensing of the pictures of another producer-distributor, to an independent exhibitor operating a theatre in competition with an affiliated theatre.

(3) To compel an exhibitor to buy other pictures as a condition of buying the picture he wants.

(4) To designate play-dates arbitrarily.

(5) To determine rentals on a percentage basis unless the theatre's operating expenses, including 6% of the gross receipts, as a service charge for the exhibitor, are first deducted from the gross receipts.

(6) To offer for license less than 50% of his full season's product during the first six-month period beginning with his exhibition season, unless the licensee, by licensing the full 50%, will find himself overbought. In such a case, the licensee shall file with the distributor a record of the names or designations of all pictures licensed to him by other producer-distributors.

(7) To refuse the cancellation of 20% of the contracted product.

(8) To allow an exhibitor to buy more pictures than he requires except a reasonable number as a protection against non-deliveries.

(9) To refuse to deliver prints if available, once a national release date for a picture has been set.

(10) To license films for an indefinite period of time or, having licensed a film for a definite period of time, for him to extend it unless it is a roadshow picture, in which case he must give the subsequent run exhibitor the option of cancelling such a picture.

(11) To "moveover" a picture.

(12) To refuse to license a picture to an independent exhibitor for no other reason than that he favors an affiliated exhibitor.

(13) To refuse to grant an exhibitor "some run."

(14) To refuse an independent exhibitor a desired run by reason of the existence of a franchise with an affiliated exhibitor in that locality.

(15) To grant unreasonable clearance on behalf of any exhibitor.

(16) To compel an exhibitor to pay unreasonable rentals as compared with the rentals paid by an affiliated theatre on a prior run.

(17) To fix minimum admission prices to be charged by an independent exhibitor.

(18) To compel the exhibitor to pay all or part of the advertising.

(19) To license its films on an optional basis.

(20) To modify a contract after exhibition with the object of circumventing any of these provisions.

(21) To identify the pictures in the contract by numbers instead of by title and either featured stars or director, unless the picture is founded on a well known novel, or a produced play, in which case only the title should suffice.

(22) To fail to insert into the contract the price of each picture.

(23) To permit an exhibitor to change the policy of his theatre if the permission will in any way affect the clearance of the immediate subsequent run exhibitor, unless such exhibitor's consent is first obtained, in writing.

(24) To refuse to deliver a print of a picture already dated, by reason of the fact that the print had been sent to some other exhibitor.

(25) To give an exhibitor a notice of availability unless he knows that he has a print available, and so kept.

(26) To grant clearance or run to any chain theatre for no other reason than that he has an interest in that chain. (EDITOR'S NOTE: One of the intents of this clause is to prevent the distributors from granting to circuits "theatreless" franchises, which provide for the circuit to be given a specific run in the event it opens a theatre in a new locality, thus depriving the existing theatre of its run.)

(27) To refuse to make a picture available to a subsequent run just because a prior run exhibitor refused to date the picture. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Four additional days are granted to the number of clearance days between the prior run and the subsequent run exhibitor.)

(28) To hold back sold pictures from one season so as to sell them the season that follows or any other subsequent season.

(29) To deliver a substitute picture without the exhibitor's consent.

(30) To enter into any licensing agreement with any exhibitor before he will have submitted to the Board, or Film Commission, his proposed form of contract. (EDITOR'S NOTE: The intent of the framers of this clause is to prevent any producer or distributor from presenting to an exhibitor a contract with some clause detrimental to the interests of the exhibitor, which clause, being printed in fine type, will escape his attention.)

(31) This paragraph includes in the aforementioned prohibitions also exhibitors, and takes in, not only the prohibi-

(Continued on last page)

"Girl in the Case" with Edmund Lowe and Janis Carter

(Columbia, April 20; time, 65 min.)

Routine program fare. It is an extremely far-fetched comedy-melodrama, the sort that may please audiences that do not mind plot inconsistencies as long as the action is fast; it has little attraction for discriminating patrons. The story, which is patterned after the style and treatment of "The Thin Man" pictures, is a completely nonsensical affair revolving around an amateur sleuth who rounds up a spy ring, though constantly hampered by his jealous wife's interference. The comedy is of the sophisticated type, occasionally resorting to slap-stick for its laughs. A number of sex situations have been dragged in by the ear, making it unsuitable for showing to children, even though the picture itself is up to the intelligence of a ten-year-old child:—

Because of his uncanny ability to pick locks and open safes, Edmund Lowe, an attorney, carries a special detective's badge, and often neglects his business to aid the police in their work, much to the disgust of Janis Carter, his wife. Lowe finds himself enmeshed in a Nazi spy plot when Robert Scott, a playboy, asks him to open up a steel chest in the basement of his home. The chest belonged to Richard Hale, Scott's uncle, who was a Nazi spy posing as the head of an American chemical company. Scott intended to obtain possession of a high explosives formula for the purpose of blackmailing his uncle. Suspicious of Scott, Lowe claims that he is unable to open the chest. Later that night he returns to the house and obtains the formula. Learning that Lowe had the formula, and realizing that he would be exposed, Hale plots to discredit him. He arranges for Carole Matthews, his secretary, to visit Lowe's apartment and to plant \$25,000 in marked bills in Lowe's bathrobe pocket. In the evening, while Lowe and his wife are out, Hale brings into their apartment a steel chest containing the dead body of Scott. Soon after Lowe and Janis return home, the police, tipped off by Hale, arrive and arrest Lowe for Scott's murder. After a series of incidents, in which Lowe escapes from jail by picking the lock, all converge on Carole's apartment where they capture both Carroll and Hale.

Joseph Hoffman and Dorcas Cochran wrote the screen play, Sam White produced it, and William Berke directed it.

"Hey, Rookie" with Ann Miller and Larry Parks

(Columbia, March 9; time, 77 min.)

A moderately entertaining program musical, with an army camp background. As with most modest-budget pictures of this type, little footage is wasted on the inconsequential story, the main attraction being Ann Miller's dancing, the music, and the specialty numbers, which are presented in vaudeville-like fashion. Highlights are the comedy antics of Joe Besser; a monologue by Jack Gilford, in which he pokes fun at the different types of motion pictures; Bob Evans, a ventriloquist; and the comic musical routines of The Vagabonds, a quartette—all are entertaining:—

Having had a quarrel with Ann Miller his girlfriend and leading lady, Larry Parks, a musical comedy producer, welcomes induction into the army. Soon after his arrival at Fort MacArthur, he is ordered by the commanding officer to stage a camp show to lift

the soldiers' morale. Parks lays plans for an expensive production costing many thousands of dollars only to be told that the cost must not exceed two hundred dollars. Despite the many military interferences, Parks manages to round up a group of talented soldiers and puts them through strenuous rehearsals. Meanwhile, in New York, Ann prepares to leave for a tour of army camps, among which was Fort MacArthur. When Ann arrives at the camp and is asked by the commanding officer to assist Parks, the newspapers report that she had been hired to save the show. This development makes Parks even more antagonistic towards Ann. After a series of misunderstandings they eventually become reconciled and, together, help make the camp show a huge success.

Henry Myers, Edward Eliscu, and Jay Gorney wrote the screen play, Irving Briskin produced it, and Charles Barton directed it. The cast includes Joe Sawyer, Hal McIntyre's orchestra and others.

"The Monster Maker" with J. Carroll Naish and Ralph Morgan

(PRC, April 15; time, 63 min.)

Those who enjoy their horror melodramas horrific, without regard for story values, should find an hour's pleasure in this one. It should get by as a supporting feature wherever this type of entertainment is acceptable. The action revolves around the machinations of a half-crazed, fake Russian scientist, who injects into his victim a serum that causes his hands, feet, and head to become so enlarged and distorted that it sends shivers up and down one's spine. It is much too horrifying for children, as well as for squeamish adults. The story itself is highly implausible and leaves much to be desired, but it does manage to maintain a fair degree of suspense. To make sure that the horror fans get their fill, a monstrous ape has been thrown in for good measure:—

J. Carroll Naish, the scientist, is attracted to Wanda McKay while attending a piano concert given by Ralph Morgan, her father; Naish noticed a marked resemblance between Wanda and his deceased wife. For a number of weeks Naish showers Wanda with gifts and flowers. Annoyed, Wanda complains to her father. Morgan visits Naish and demands that he stop annoying his daughter. A fight follows, and Morgan is knocked unconscious. Naish, who had been studying a rare disease that caused one's features to become enlarged, injects the germ into Morgan. Regaining consciousness, Morgan returns home. Within a few days he finds himself turning into a hideous creature. Realizing that Naish was responsible for his condition, Morgan visits the scientist with the intent of killing him, but he is overpowered by Naish's giant assistant, drugged, and chained to a bed. Naish telephones Wanda and informs her that her father had come to him for a consultation and that he was too sick to leave. Wanda rushes to Naish's office and, finding her father chained, insists that he be released. The mad scientist demands that she marry him, and starts forcing his attentions on her. Enraged, Morgan breaks his bounds and kills Naish in a furious attack. Tala Birell, Naish's laboratory assistant, who for years had been under his hypnotic influence, brings Morgan back to normal by injecting into him a serum that the dead scientist had discovered as a cure.

Pierre Gendron and Martin Mooney wrote the screen play, Sigmund Neufeld produced it, and Sam Newfield directed it.

"The Yellow Canary" with Anna Neagle and Richard Greene

(RKO, no release date set; time, 84 min.)

An undistinguished British-made spy melodrama, of program grade. The film's original ninety-eight minutes running time has been cut to eighty-four minutes for American consumption, but this does not seem to have helped matters, for the continuity is choppy, owing to bad editing. As a matter of fact, the first half keeps one wondering what it is all about. The story premise becomes clear in the second half, and then it turns out to be no more than a conventional story of espionage and counter-espionage, offering little that has not been done many times in similar pictures. Except for the closing scenes, in which the spies are rounded, up the action is not particularly exciting:—

Ostracized by her friends and family because she was ostensibly a Nazi sympathizer, Anna Neagle, an aristocratic Englishwoman, is compelled to take exile in Canada. Actually, Anna was a secret British agent. On board a ship bound for Halifax, Anna becomes friendly with Albert Lieven, a Polish officer, and Richard Greene, who, too, was a British agent. Neither Anna nor Greene were aware of each other's identities. Arriving in Halifax, Lieven arranges a meeting between Anna and his invalid mother (Lucie Mannheim). Despite Anna's apparent enthusiasm for the New Order, and Lieven's mother's expressed abhorrence for everything Nazi, the two women like each other. A romance between Anna and Lieven develops. Convinced that Anna's sympathies for the Nazis were genuine, Lieven reveals himself to her as a German agent and offers her an opportunity to serve the Fuehrer. She accepts and learns that Miss Mannheim was actually a physically fit woman, head of the Nazi spy system in Canada. Anna and Greene eventually realize that they are fellow-agents. They coordinate their efforts in an attempt to learn the spy ring's plans. Attending a meeting of the spies, Anna learns of a plot to blow up Halifax Harbor. When she endeavors to convey the information to Greene, the spies, aware of her intentions, threaten to shoot her unless she telephones Greene and allays his suspicions. Risking death, Anna shouts the truth over the telephone. Greene and the police arrive in time to apprehend the spies, but not before Lieven's gun wounds Anna. Returning to England with Greene, now her husband, Anna is welcomed by her friends and family.

Miles Malleon and DeWitt Bodeen wrote the screen play, and Herbert Wilcox produced and directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

THE HEN THAT LAY THE GOLDEN EGGS MAY BE WORKED TO DEATH

I have read in Bill Wilkerson's editorial column in his March 22 issue of *The Hollywood Reporter* the following:

"How do you account for so many bad pictures doing really hit business? . . ."

In expressing his views in answer to such a condition, Mr. Wilkerson attributes it to two factors: the fact that people have more money to spend on entertainment, and that the public had lowered its entertainment demands.

Mr. Wilkerson is right only in part—in the fact that people have more money to spend. Another rea-

son is that those who have dear ones away from home, fighting somewhere around the world, want to take their minds off their anxiety and grab any picture, no matter what it is, as long as it is a picture, and as long as they have a hope that it will turn out entertaining. They no longer "shop", as they did before the war—they simply buy a ticket and go into a theatre, unless it is a highly publicized picture, in which event they go into the theatre to see that picture, either to be entertained, or to have their minds taken off their anxieties.

But the war will end some time, and the lush days will probably be over. In such an event, those who have been careless in the quality of stories they have been buying, thus making any kind of pictures, will either have lost the art of recognizing good stories, or will have failed to attract to their story departments writers who could recognize such stories. Then they will pay, and pay dearly.

The proportion of poor pictures to good pictures is greater today than it ever was, my friend Nate Blumberg's belief to the contrary notwithstanding. There is more junk foisted on the public today than there ever was.

Yes, the big pictures are better today than they ever were, for the reason that the technical men know more about their work, but story choosing has fallen behind. That is why the other pictures are so poor.

AID FOR INDEPENDENTS FROM AFFILIATED EXHIBITORS

According to Red Kann, Hollywood representative of the Quigley Publications, the Paramount partners, upon winding up their meeting at Arrowhead Springs, California, decided that a roadshow is not a roadshow, even if it has cost three million dollars to produce, unless it has entertainment based on the picture's merits and not on the distributor's artificial enthusiasm.

The producer partners will not, of course, like what the exhibitor partners have decided. But one can say at least one thing—the attitude of the exhibitor partners is correct in every respect.

A WORD OF CAUTION TO EXHIBITORS IN DEFENSE AREA CITIES

It is assumed, and with logic, that, when peace is declared, defense area cities, which are swollen with defense workers, their families, and business men, will lose much of their population. Cities such as Los Angeles, Washington, Norfolk and many others will not be able to sustain the population they now have if the war plants now in operation should close down, unless, of course, immediate conversion to other kind of manufacturing takes place within a short time.

Though those of you who buy films from consenting producer-distributors in small blocks are in no danger, those who buy from companies that sell their products in yearly blocks should be careful, for if peace is declared and the population migrates, you will find yourselves with contracts calling for war prices instead of peace prices.

You should have a clause in your 1944-45 contracts providing for the automatic reduction of the rentals in the event that peace is declared and a great part of the population of your city migrates.

tions already enumerated but also others to which either producers, distributors, or exhibitors may resort, even though they are not mentioned in the bill.

* * *

Part of a statement that was issued by ITOA last week reads as follows:

"The bill is broad, comprehensive, and sufficiently implemented to honestly and fairly bring about amelioration of the present intolerable conditions from which the subsequent run independent exhibitor is suffering . . .

"This bill . . . was completed and approved before the adjournment of the State Legislature and was . . . to be presented at the Legislature before its adjournment." But just about the time the association's leaders were to introduce it, industry leaders approached them and pleaded with them to withhold action, promising that all these unfair practices would be taken care of by the amended Consent Decree.

In the fourth paragraph, however, the statement reads as follows:

"We have examined the proposed Consent Decree and find no comfort or amelioration therein for the subsequent run independent exhibitor and unequivocally state that the Consent Decree accomplishes for such exhibitor nothing that has been claimed for it. However, the argument has been made to the Independent Theatre Owners Association, Inc., that the Consent Decree has not yet been put into its final form, and that in its final form there will be further amendments thereto and that furthermore . . . the industry in this territory through its leaders will go beyond the Consent Decree in ameliorating various conditions unduly harsh and oppressive upon the subsequent run independent exhibitor if the Consent Decree does not give adequate relief.

"Upon such representations, and because of an inherent antipathy to the government of an industry by legislation, the Independent Theatre Owners Association, Inc., in the exercise of patience and so that it may never be accused of having been unwilling to afford to the industry every reasonable opportunity of permitting it to put its own house in order, decided not to present the bill at the last session of the Legislature but to await the result of the matters herein referred to. Unless the Consent Decree and the industry itself fulfill their . . . promises, this bill in its present form will be introduced and pressed for passage and enactment into law at the next session . . ."

A copy of this bill has been sent to Tom C. Clark, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Consent Decree, with a request that he examine its provisions and incorporate them into the Consent Decree.

The provisions of the bill are so drastic that they need no comment whatever from HARRISON'S REPORTS in order that the exhibitors of the entire country may be impressed. All that it desires to say is that, Harry Brandt, who opposed the Neely Bill bitterly when it was offered in Congress, has at last come to realize that only legislation can correct the abuses against the smaller exhibitors.

Perhaps the industry leaders will be so impressed with this document that they will be willing to make important concessions for the peace of the industry. Unless they do so, I fear that the fire that ITOA has started in the State of New York will spread to every state of the Union. In such an event, the industry leaders will be unable to put it out.

Perhaps Bill Rodgers will be able to persuade them now to grant the reforms that he has been advocating all along.

A PUZZLE

Every one of you knows, I am sure, by this time that, about two weeks ago Ed Kuykendall, president of MPTOA, went to Washington and called on Tom C. Clark, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Consent Decree, and recommended that the Department of Justice scrap the Consent Decree and proceed with the prosecution of the anti-trust suit against the defendant major companies, at the

same time prohibiting the affiliated circuits from expanding their theatre holdings.

In the event that the Department did not feel it advisable to drop the Consent Decree, Kuykendall requested that the Government incorporate in an amended decree stipulations by which the distributors may be compelled to:

(1) Sell their pictures twice a year, in two blocks, each block to be sold during a six-month period, with a twenty percent cancellation provision and with a stipulation that the exhibitor be not compelled to buy shorts in order for him to obtain features. The provision should stipulate also that the exhibitor should be allowed to buy only part of each block, if he should so see fit.

(2) Insert into the contract the price of the features, at the time the exhibitor is asked to sign it.

(3) Sell the roadshows as well as the percentage pictures separately and not in the same contract as the flat-rental pictures.

(4) Eliminate play-date designation.

(5) Adopt a simplified standard form of contract, in which there should be defined fair practices as regards to:

(a) Moveovers.

(b) Extended runs.

(c) Play-date availability.

(d) Checking rights.

(e) Substitutions.

(f) Price allocations.

(g) Designated play-dates.

(h) Advertising ethics.

(i) Unsuitable as well as objectionable pictures, and other forms of abuses.

In regards to arbitration, Kuykendall recommended that the present provisions be amended so that the arbitrators may be given unrestricted powers and jurisdiction in controversies involving clearance and run, and to prohibit the representation of any litigant by attorneys and to adopt also otherwise provisions so that the cost of arbitration may be reduced for the exhibitor.

The Decree, Kuykendall said, should not run more than three years, so that, at the end of that period of time, either party may apply for the modification of the terms, and it should end six months after termination of the war, if such time should be earlier than the three-year period.

All these recommendations are sound, and would benefit the independent exhibitor immensely if they should be adopted. They are the same reforms for which Allied States Association has been battling ever since it was founded—the same reforms for which some independent regional associations have been fighting.

But what puzzles me is the motive that has prompted Ed Kuykendall to make these recommendations. There is no doubt in my mind that some of the MPTOA regional leaders who accompanied Kuykendall to Washington were sincere in their desire to see these reforms put through by the Department of Justice; but here is what puzzles me and should puzzle every one who will read these lines: The money required for the upkeep of MPTOA, or Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America, comes directly from producer sources; each year the affiliated circuits apportion among themselves the funds necessary to pay Ed Kuykendall his weekly salary and his travelling expenses, and to cover all other organizational expenses. The recommendations that Ed has made to the Department of Justice are detrimental to the interests of the producers. Why, then, should he have made them? What is behind the move?

Some theories have been advanced by some friends of mine; but in view of the fact that HARRISON'S REPORTS does not want to advance theories without facts to support them it refrains from printing them. Perhaps some one of you has the facts. If you have them, send them along.

Not that this paper wants to be like the farmer who looks at a gift horse in the mouth; only that it does not want to accept a gift horse and find that it was handed a jackass.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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FACTS ARE DEADLY

Frederick C. Othman, in his syndicated Hollywood column that appeared in the April 3 issue of the *Cincinnati Inquirer*, criticizes the public severely for patronizing poor motion pictures. The critics may say that a picture is "awful," but the public ignores that critics and crowds the theatre just the same, "and the first thing you know," says Othman, "the producer is bragging about his hit. Honest he is, and if anybody sneers, he silences 'em with the box office figures."

Mr. Othman goes on to say that it is easier to make bad movies than good ones, "and if the bad ones bring in the profits, well you know there's a vicious circle in the making..."

Commenting upon Mr. Othman's article, Mr. Willis Vance, chairman of the Independent Exhibitors Forum, of Cincinnati, expresses the wish that Mr. Othman were an exhibitor, for in this manner he would have an inkling of how serious is the exhibitor's plight. "He should have to play and pay inflated film rentals and percentages on some of these super-dupers," says Mr. Vance, "then he would really be indignant."

There is no question that Mr. Othman is right. I have been present at distributor meetings in which the quality of the product was held to be finer than at any other time of the picture business' history. And yet in the last few years the trade paper critics have had the time of their lives picking "ten best" out of each year's product.

To prove to you that the ratio of the bad to the good pictures has not altered during the current year, let me present to you the ration of bad to good pictures that have been reviewed in HARRISON'S REPORTS since January 1:

The number of pictures reviewed has been 78. Grouping those that are anywhere from excellent to good we get 13 pictures, or slightly more than 16%.

Let us go back to 1939 to see what was the quality of pictures during part of that year:

In the issues of September 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, the number of pictures whose box office performances were reported was 257. Taking the same range in quality (from excellent to good), we get 78 pictures, or a little more than 30%.

Let us take another year, closer to this year:

In the November 29, 1941, issue, 67 pictures were reported. The number of pictures of the same range of quality was 13, or nearly 20%.

Do these figures indicate that the quality of pictures has improved "tremendously" this year?

WHAT A WONDERFUL PICTURE THE PUBLIC SAW TOMORROW

It seems as if an ad writer at Twentieth Century-Fox saw the United Artists' picture, "It Happened Tomorrow," and became inspired. The UA picture revolves around a young newspaper reporter who obtains a copy of tomorrow's newspaper today, thus enabling him to foretell in advance the news that was yet to happen.

I am referring to a two-page advertisement in the Wednesday, April 5, issue of weekly *Variety*, wherein this company blares forth that the brightest news on Broadway is

that "Twentieth Century-Fox Jams Roxy with 'Four Jills in a Jeep.'"

This particular issue of *Variety* was on my desk at nine o'clock in the morning, on Wednesday, having been printed and mailed on the previous day. "Four Jills in a Jeep" opened at the Roxy a few hours after *Variety* had been delivered to me!

This is not the first time that Twentieth Century-Fox's clairvoyant ad writer has told in advance the enthusiasm with which one of his company's pictures had been received even before any one had a chance to see it and become enthusiastic.

On February 1, Twentieth Century-Fox held an evening preview of "The Sullivans" at the Roxy Theatre, in this city, to which it invited the leading exhibitors in the territory. Before the last reel of the picture had been run off, newsboys on the outside of the theatre were hawking their morning newspapers, which appear on the streets of New York around 11 P. M. the previous night, containing a fairly large advertisement telling of how the preview audience "applauded, hailed and acclaimed" the picture, and quoting comments that purportedly appeared on the cards submitted to the audience after the showing. I wonder how many of the Roxy's patrons, and of the exhibitors, who bought the morning papers soon after leaving the theatre, snickered at that ad?

When a company predicts through its advertisements that one of its pictures will be received enthusiastically by the public, that comes under the heading of exploitation. But when it bluntly tells you of that which has not yet happened, that comes under the heading of misleading advertising, and detracts, not only from the prestige of the company, but also from the value of the picture.

Some one at Twentieth Century-Fox should make that ad writer throw away his crystal ball.

SECRETARY OF TREASURY HONORS INDUSTRY

Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, honored the achievements of the industry's Fourth War Loan Campaign recently when he came to New York especially for the occasion of accepting the presentation to him of a "Review of the Motion Picture Industry's 4th War Loan Campaign." This review, which is a hand-made 700-pound book, with stand, leather covers and gold-embossed lettering comprising 100 pages, was presented to the Secretary by Mr. Charles P. Skouras, Chairman of the 4th War Loan Campaign of the Motion Picture Industry.

The gigantic volume, which was created in Mr. Skouras' honor by his co-workers in the campaign, has an over-all measurement of 48 by 66 inches. It will be a lasting testimonial to the industry's achievements in the war effort, and it will be placed among the prominent archives of the Treasury Department.

Present at the ceremonies besides Secretary Morgenthau and Mr. Skouras were F. H. Ricketson, Jr., National Vice-Chairman; B. V. Sturdivant, National Campaign Director; Robert Selig, Assistant Campaign Director; Sam Shain, Director Trade Relations; A. J. Krappman, Assistant Campaign Director; and Si Fabian, Francis Harmon, and Arthur Mayer of the War Activities Committee.

"Days of Glory" with Tamara Toumanova and Gregory Peck

(RKO, no release date set; time, 86 min.)

A fairly good war melodrama, strong enough to top a double bill. Even though the story is not new, and the players are unknown to picture audiences, the picture holds one's attention throughout, owing to the fine performances, and to the care with which it has been produced and directed. The story is one of courage and self-sacrifice, with a strong romantic interest, told through the exploits of a small band of Russian guerrillas, whose members, in age and position in life, are a cross-section of the people of Russia. Some of the action, which stresses the individual bravery of the characters, is both stirring and thrilling. The closing scenes, where the guerrillas sacrifice their lives to divert the main Nazi army's attention during a Red army counter-attack, are highly exciting:—

Living in a cellar hideaway amid the ruins of a bombed monastery, a band of Russian guerrillas carry on their work against the Nazis, destroying property and sniping at soldiers. Included in the group were Gregory Peck, the commandant; Maria Palmer, a fearless young woman, who loved Peck deeply; Dena Penn, a ten-year-old girl, who did the cooking; Glenn Vernon, Dena's teen-age brother, to whom she was devoted; Lowell Gilmore, a teacher; and four other Russians. When Tamara Toumanova, a beautiful Moscow ballerina, is found exhausted in the woods and is brought to the hideout, Maria and Dena look upon her with cool disdain because of her inability to perform household duties, and of her dislike for violence. Tamara, however, establishes herself as a true partisan one day when she kills a Nazi soldier who had discovered the hideaway. Peck falls in love with Tamara, causing extreme anguish to Maria. When Maria loses her life in an unsuccessful attempt to carry a message through the German lines, Tamara and young Vernon volunteer to make another attempt. Tamara succeeds in delivering the message, but Vernon, who had been captured, loses his life when he courageously refuses to reveal the names of his comrades. When word comes that combined Russian forces will launch a counter-attack within twenty-four hours, Peck and his gallant guerrillas use themselves as decoys to attract the main Nazi army, fully realizing that they will die in the effort. Tamara and Peck meet death under the steel treads of a huge Nazi tank, but they die happy in the knowledge that they had sacrificed their lives for a just cause.

Casey Robinson wrote the screen play and produced it, and Jacques Tourneur directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Show Business" with Eddie Cantor, Joan Davis, George Murphy and Constance Moore

(RKO, no release date set; time, 92 min.)

Unlike most musicals that depend on lavish production numbers for its entertainment, this one depends on the talents of the individual players, and with highly enjoyable results. It is a lively mixture of comedy, romance, music and song, the sort that offers good mass entertainment. The story, which is of the typical backstage variety, is lightweight, but it presents so many amusing situations and opportunities for gags that it keeps one entertained all the way through. Eddie Cantor, to whom this is the first effort at producing, has wisely permitted the others in the cast to share the spotlight with him, making the most of their talents. Individually, Cantor and Joan Davis can provoke hearty laughter by their antics; together they are even more comical, for neither one "cramps" the other's style. George Murphy and Constance Moore contribute much to the entertainment with their dancing and singing. The tunes are old favorites, most of which Cantor popularized during his many years on the stage:—

Making his debut on amateur night, in 1914, Eddie

Cantor is encouraged by George Murphy, a song-and-dance man. Amused at Cantor's eagerness, Murphy makes him his stage partner. The boys meet Constance Moore and Joan Davis, a sister act, and talk the girls into joining with them as a foursome. Murphy falls in love with Constance, thus rousing the jealousy of Nancy Kelly, a burlesque singer. Meanwhile Joan pursues Cantor. Constance and Murphy marry and, together with Cantor and Joan, work their way up in vaudeville, eventually playing the Palace in New York. Expecting a baby, Constance withdraws from the act while the other three continue without her. On the night of the baby's birth, Nancy deliberately contrives to keep Murphy away from the hospital. Constance, depressed because her baby had died, and believing that Murphy had been having a good time with Nancy when he should have been with her, divorces him. Murphy goes to France during World War I and, upon his return, seeks a reconciliation with Constance. Feeling that their marriage would never work out because of Nancy, Constance, though still in love with Murphy, tells him that she planned to marry Don Douglas, an agent, who had long been in love with her. Murphy disappears. Meanwhile Constance decides that she does not love Douglas, and returns to the stage. Months later, Cantor finds Murphy penniless in a cheap San Francisco cafe. He puts Murphy back on his feet and both return to New York where, with Joan, they are featured in a Ziegfeld show. Murphy wins Constance back by singing a romantic song to her from the stage. Cantor succumbs to Joan and marries her at a double ceremony with Murphy and Constance.

Joseph Quillan and Dorothy Bennett wrote the screen play, Eddie Cantor produced it, and Edwin L. Marin directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

"Seven Days Ashore" with Wally Brown and Alan Carney

(RKO, no release date set; time, 74 min.)

This semi-musical is no better than the two previous pictures with these would-be comedians, for the story is inane, and the comedy forced. The action is slow all the way through. At times it seems as if the spectator is asked to stop expecting any more story progress until the actors either finish their instrument-playing, or their singing, or whatever the author set out to make them do. There is some instrumental and some vocal music, but not of a quality to save the picture:—

When the battle-scarred freighter Golden Gate puts into San Francisco Bay for repairs, Gordon Oliver, a member of the crew and son of wealthy parents, is met at the pier by three girls—Elaine Shepard, a society girl, whom his parents wanted him to marry, and Virginia Mayo and Amelita Ward, two girl violinists in a woman's orchestra. Oliver is able to prevent the three of them meeting him at the same time by turning the violinists over to his pals, Wally Brown and Alan Carney. To further the match, Marjorie Gateson, Oliver's mother, arranges for a musicale at their home so that Elaine and Oliver would be together as much as possible and thus decide to marry. But Elaine knows of Oliver's philandering and tells him that she will not marry him. Aware that Oliver was bored at the musicale, his pals induce the girl orchestra and other acts of the "Indigo Club" to go to Oliver's home and disrupt the party, but the guests enjoy the "swing" music better. Virginia and Amelita serve on Oliver papers for breach of promise. To save himself from the suits, Oliver induces his pals to pretend that they are in love with the girls. In the end, each of his pals marry one of the two violinists, and before long all misunderstandings are removed and Gordon and Elaine marry. But the honeymoons are interrupted when the three husbands are ordered to their ship for another voyage.

John Auer produced and directed it from a screen play by Edward Verdier, Irving Phillips and Lawrence Kimble.

Morally suitable for all.

"Address Unknown" with Paul Lukas*(Columbia, no release date set; time, 73 min.)*

A forceful but depressing anti-Nazi drama. Although it is not a cheerful entertainment, it should do fairly good business because of the popularity of Paul Lukas, this year's Academy Award winner, and of the fact that the film is based on the widely read short story, of the same title, which was printed also in *Reader's Digest*, in condensed form. The story is a tense, though somewhat artificial, dramatization of the subjugation to Nazism of a genial, well-respected German-American business man, who becomes hopelessly enmeshed in the Nazi movement when he returns to his homeland on a visit. All the players do well, but top honors go to Paul Lukas for his dynamic portrayal of a man who disintegrates morally and physically when he falls victim to the very cause he had subscribed to. The action for the most part is slow-moving. The photography and production values are fairly good:—

Paul Lukas, a Christian, and Morris Carnovsky, a Jew, both German-Americans, operate an art gallery in San Francisco. Both men look forward to the pending marriage of K. T. Stevens, Carnovsky's daughter, and Peter Van Eyck, Lukas' son. When Lukas returns to Germany with his family to buy art treasures for the business, he is accompanied by Miss Stevens, who wanted to study drama in Vienna. Van Eyck remains in San Francisco to help Carnovsky with the business. In Germany, Lukas becomes friendly with Baron Carl Esmond, a Hitler devotee. The Baron interests Lukas in the Nazi ideology and makes him an important official soon after Hitler comes into power. Lukas' Nazi feelings are reflected in his letters to Carnovsky and his son, much to their disappointment. When it becomes known that his partner in America was Jewish, Lukas writes Carnovsky and asks him to stop corresponding. Meanwhile Miss Stevens, making her first appearance on a Vienna stage, defies a Nazi edict to delete certain lines from the play. She is denounced as a Jewess and is compelled to flee for her life. She makes her way to Lukas' residence, but Lukas refuses her admission and cold-heartedly lets her die at the hands of storm troopers. When Carnovsky writes Lukas and inquires about his daughter, Lukas replies that she is dead and demands that he cease further correspondence. Angry at his father for having abandoned his fiancée, Van Eyck deliberately incriminates Lukas with the Nazis by sending to him a series of code letters that make no sense, signing Carnovsky's name to them. The Nazis refuse to accept Lukas' explanation that it was a plot to discredit him. Deserted by his friends and family, Lukas, maddened by the daily arrival of the letters, eventually is shot by the Nazis for treason.

Herbert Dalmus wrote the screen play, and William Cameron Menzies produced and directed it.

Adult entertainment.

"Pin Up Girl" with Betty Grable, Martha Raye and Joe E. Brown*(20th Century-Fox, May release; time, 83 min.)*

This is a typical Betty Grable vehicle, though not as good as the previous musicals in which she has appeared. From a box-office point of view, however, it should do as well as her previous pictures, for this one, too, has elaborately staged production numbers, photographed in Technicolor, and tuneful music of the popular variety. But the story, which required no less than three screen play writers, is extremely thin; it is based on the mistaken identity theme, and serves merely as a means to introduce the musical numbers. Martha Raye, Joe E. Brown, and Eugene Pallette handle the comedy, some of it amusing, but for the most part the script has failed to take full advantage of their capabilities. Charlie Spivak and his orchestra furnish the music:

Betty Grable, accompanied by Dorothea Kent, her girlfriend, leaves her home town in Missouri for Washington, D. C., where she had accepted a stenographer's post in the Navy Department. When they stop over in New York

while en route to Washington, Betty decides that it would be amusing to act like a celebrity. Together with the unwilling Dorothea, she gains entrance to Joe E. Brown's night-club, where Brown was giving a party for John Harvey, a Guadalcanal hero. Betty poses as a Broadway singing star and wins Harvey's attentions. Parting with Betty at the railroad station, Harvey neglects to obtain her address. Weeks later in Washington, Betty is appalled to learn that she had been assigned to Harvey to help him with his reports on Japanese tactics. She hastily disguises herself by wearing Dorothea's spectacles and succeeds in hiding her identity from him. Listening to him rave about the actress he had met in New York and about his desire to meet her again, Betty arranges to meet him that evening as herself. Pleased at having found her, and desiring that she remain in Washington, Harvey arranges with Brown, who had opened a night spot in Washington, to employ her as his singing star. Betty continues the deception—stenographer by day, and cabaret singer by night. Annoyed by Betty's success, Martha Raye, a rival singer, causes a rift between Betty and Harvey. Things come to a head when Betty, in her role as stenographer, is taken to Brown's night-club by Harvey. When her number is announced and she leaves Harvey's table to sing, the young man first realizes her elaborate hoax. He hurries backstage after her number and both fall into each other's arms.

Robert Ellis, Helen Logan, and Earl Baldwin wrote the screen play, William LeBaron produced it, and Bruce Humberstone directed it. The cast includes Dave Willock, the Condos Brothers, Marcel Dalio and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Bermuda Mystery" with Preston Foster and Ann Rutherford*(20th Century-Fox, May release; time, 66 min.)*

A routine program murder-mystery melodrama; it should satisfy the followers of this type of entertainment, for the murderer's identity is concealed until the finish. Whatever excitement the melodramatic action may create is rendered ineffectual by the weak comedy interpolations. It is only in the closing scenes that one is held in suspense—there the murderer is trapped. The romantic interest is developed in a routine manner:—

Convinced that the death of her wealthy uncle in Bermuda was due, not to heart disease, but to murder, Ann Rutherford determines to find the criminal. She believes that the crime had been committed by one of five men—Charles Butterworth, Theodore Von Eltz, Roland Drew, John Eldredge and Kane Richmond—World War I buddies of her uncle, who, ten years previously, had joined with the dead man in contributing \$10,000 each to a trust fund, the money to be divided among the survivors at the end of ten years. Ann goes to New York, where she enlists the aid of Preston Foster, a private detective, who reluctantly agrees to help her—Foster had closed his business affairs in preparation for his marriage to Helene Reynolds on the following day. Foster's interest in the case is aroused when Ann discovers Drew dead, the victim of a poisoned cigarette. Foster becomes so absorbed in the investigation that he neglects to keep his marriage appointment. As a result, Helene leaves him. In the course of the investigation, Von Eltz, Eldredge and Richmond, too, are murdered, under circumstances that lead the police to suspect Ann and Foster of the crimes. Police Inspector Richard Lane sets out on their trail. After a series of incidents, in which the pair track down numerous clues, and at the same time endeavor to elude Lane, Foster traps Jean Howard, Butterworth's wife. He proves that she had killed the others so that her husband would gain sole possession of the trust fund, and that she had planned to kill Butterworth so that the money would revert to her. Foster makes new marriage plans, this time with Ann.

W. Scott Darling wrote the screen play, William Girard produced it, and Benjamin Stoloff directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

STILL A PUZZLE

As a result of the action that Ed Kuykendall, president of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America, took at Washington by calling on Tom Clark, Assistant Attorney General, and urging him to scrap the Consent Decree and to proceed with the anti-trust suit against the major companies, Joseph Bernhard, head of the Warner Brothers theatre department, resigned as a member of the MPTOA board of directors on the grounds that Kuykendall's action had been determined by the board at a meeting during which he was absent, and that he was opposed to the resolutions passed.

With Mr. Bernhard's resignation ends, I am sure, also the share of the Warner Brothers' contribution for the upkeep of this unnatural exhibitor organization.

I say "unnatural" exhibitor organization because it is kept up by the producers merely to be used as a front in battling genuinely independent exhibitor organizations before legislative bodies. The legislators, not understanding the difference between unaffiliated and affiliated exhibitors, may accept either the protests or the recommendations of the president of MPTOA as coming from truly independent exhibitors.

There are, of course, some independent exhibitors in the ranks of the MPTOA membership, as well as directorship, but these are either misinformed as to the nature of the organization, or well informed but serving their own selfish interests, putting forward as their excuse the fact that they dislike some of those who are connected with Allied States Association.

Who has instigated Kuykendall's action at Washington? It certainly cannot be the independent exhibitors who belong to MPTOA, for they are so few in number that their dues are not enough to cover the office postage.

Not that the action was wrong; but it was not, in my opinion, genuine, and I am sure that Tom Clark will be influenced in his decisions, not by what the representatives of MPTOA have recommended but by what has been put forward by the representatives of the truly independent exhibitors.

Already Ed Kuykendall is "crawfishing." He has issued a statement declaring that his motives have been misunderstood. Certainly Joe Bernhard did not misunderstand his motives. The proof of it has been the fact that he has resigned as a member of MPTOA's board of directors.

If any more resignations take place, I fear that Ed Kuykendall's meal ticket will be in danger, unless, of course, the remaining affiliated circuits increase their contributions so as to cover up the loss.

If Ed Kuykendall had sought the advice of a grammar school child, he would have been told that his action would prove disastrous to his organization's finances.

Last week I said that Ed's action at Washington was a puzzle. It is still a puzzle.

VIGOROUS EXPLOITATION OF MEDIOCRE PICTURES IS HARMFUL

Two weeks ago it was announced in the trade papers that Maurice A. Bergman, Universal's Eastern advertising and publicity director, went to Cincinnati for the purpose of completing plans for the simultaneous opening of Walter Wanger's "Ladies Courageous" in seventy cities, reached by the radio station WLW, with which the exploitation campaign is tied.

One of the exploitation features will be to pick a "lady courageous" in each of the seventy cities.

That the campaign will be a success no one can have any doubt; the theatres that will play this picture in that territory and in all other territories where a similar campaign will be put over should make good profits.

But here is the question: making the public believe that "Ladies Courageous" is a great picture and attracting them to the theatres should not be difficult to an exploitation man like Maurice Bergman, particularly when he works under another expert, John Joseph, whose headquarters are at the studio. But what will be the after effects? Certainly Joseph and Bergman do not believe that "Ladies Courageous" is a great picture—no one who has seen it believes it is. The Loew circuit, which is playing it now, does not seem to think so if we are to judge by the kind of advertisements it has put in the New York papers.

There are times when critics disagree as to a picture's entertaining qualities; some of them think they are excellent, while some that they are very bad. In such an event, a film company is justified in resorting to great exploitation campaigns, letting the public be the judge. But there seems to be no division of opinion as to "Ladies Courageous." For Universal, then, to proceed to exploit it in such a way as to make the public believe that it is a great entertainment may hurt, not only Universal, not only the theatres that will play it, but also the entire industry, for if the practice is resorted to often, the public will undoubtedly lose faith in picture advertisements and exploitation campaigns.

Let us use moderation in our claims of picture entertainment.

NOW IT'S UNANIMOUS

The front page of the March 29 Service Bulletin of the Independent Theatre Owners Association of Northern California has this to say about the unanimity of independent exhibitor organizations:

"NOW IT IS UNANIMOUS!—ALL EXHIBITOR ORGANIZATIONS are together on what to do with the Consent Decree—HERE'S THE LIST!

"P.C.C.I.T.O.

"M.P.T.O.A.

"Allied States Association.

"Independent Exhibitors, Inc.

"I.T.O. of Iowa-Nebraska.

"M.P.T.O. of Virginia.

"Unaffiliated Independent Exhibitors (New York).

"A.T.O. of Northwest, Inc.

"North-Central A.I. Theatres.

"All 48 states are represented in the above group. The above organizations are the Voice of the Exhibitors in the U. S. A. and they all agree.

"Agree on what?

"The distributors can no longer claim the Exhibitors are helplessly divided in thought and policy. No longer are they a voice in the darkness. THEY ARE UNITED AND KNOW WHAT THEY WANT AND WHAT IS JUST.

"The Distributors should now cease their Fifth Column attempts to sow seeds of dissension in Exhibitor ranks—should abandon their efforts to extricate themselves through pull and influence—should recognize that the Exhibitors are united in purpose and effort to secure the necessary reforms—should cease horsing around with the Department of Justice and proceed either to negotiate an effective Decree, which will afford the Exhibitors the measures of relief for which they are united, or else join issue on the Government's suit and let the law take its course."

NEW ENGLAND EXHIBITORS REJOIN ALLIED

The Washington office of Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors announces that the application of the Independent Exhibitors, Inc., of New England, to again become a member of National Allied, has been approved by the board of directors unanimously.

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Devoted Chiefly to the Interests of the Exhibitors

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Columns, if It is to Benefit the Exhibitor.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1944

No. 18

A WELL MERITED PRAISE FOR NATIONAL SCREEN SERVICE

"ALLIED STATES ASSOCIATION

"of

"MOTION PICTURE EXHIBITORS

"729 Fifteenth Street, N. W.

"Washington, D. C.

"April 22, 1944

"Dear Pete:

"Recurring to our conversation on Thursday evening, I am in complete agreement with you that the motion picture industry as a whole has made a valuable contribution to the war effort for which the public, unless pressed too hard, will yield grateful acknowledgement. The reason I qualify this prediction is that acts of patriotism, like acts of charity, are more meritorious when performed modestly than when shouted from the housetops.

"There is a grave danger of an unfavorable reaction from an over-dose of self-laudation in the guise of entertainment for which the public is supposed to pay. I have felt that certain films—features, shorts and newsreel shots—showering praise on certain executives and stars for doing what all good citizens are expected to do, were in questionable taste. This feeling is confirmed by the scathing review of 'Follow the Boys' in TIME (4/24) which harks back to an old silent sub-title about the man who became 'musclebound from patting himself on the back.' The reviewer adds that 'the air gets so thick with self-congratulation that it is hard to see the patriotism.'

"However, it is pleasant to record that in addition to the noisy ones who seemingly think of patriotism only in terms of publicity, the industry also numbers a multitude of splendid men and women who serve only for the privilege of serving. This includes thousands of independent exhibitors who would be barred from national recognition even if they sought it.

"But I have in mind one organization whose contributions top all others and who could parade their patriotism before the industry and the public if only their innate modesty did not forbid. I refer to National Screen Service Corporation, and especially to Herman Robbins and George Dembow. When one thinks of the great work of that organization in preparing and distributing advertising and trailers for all the great drives, one realizes what serving the country really means. I doubt if any other organization in the industry has made a comparable contribution to the cause—certainly not in comparison to size and resources.

"It is even more pleasant to record that they did not wait for Pearl Harbor to jar them into a sense of their responsibility. National Screen made a patriotic trailer for Allied, at bare cost of production, as long ago as February, 1939. Men like that make the industry seem grown-up.

"Yours very truly,

"ABRAM F. MYERS

"Mr. P. S. Harrison,

"Publisher, Harrison's Reports,

"1270 Sixth Avenue,

"New York 20, N. Y."

I am in full accord with Mr. Myers in the tribute he pays to National Screen Service in general, and to Herman Robbins and George Dembow, in particular, for there has not been

a cause that they have failed to serve with all their heart, even though the cost to them has frequently been great. Yet they have never complained; they have always rolled up their sleeves and gone to work for any worthy cause that has been presented to them, particularly for causes that have served the national interest.

National Screen Service has been rendering a great service also to the exhibitors. Instead of trying to get all they could from the exhibitors, Messrs. Robbins and Dembow have so adjusted their trailer-service charges as to make them least burdensome to the exhibitors, leaving for themselves a fair profit for their investment and for the work they are doing. I have heard it said that, if there were not in existence a company such as National Screen Service, the industry should have created one.

I take great pleasure in joining Mr. Myers in paying this tribute to the men who have worked so hard to earn it.

A CHANCE TO USE INGENUITY

The motion picture industry is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, for it was on April 14, 1894, when the first motion picture was projected, at 1155 Broadway, New York City.

The industry's Public Information Committee, headed by Si Seadler, advertising manager of MGM, has prepared a press book for the exhibitors in an effort to aid them to put over a celebration locally and thus benefit their box-offices. This book contains the history of the motion picture, historical stills, feature stories and layouts. Its exploitation section has suggestions for theatre displays, for local celebrations and for radio contests; also a list of early films for showing.

The Public Information Committee urges the exhibitors to form local committees that will assist them in the celebration. There has been already organized a national committee, headed by Harold Fitzgerald, president of the Fox-Wisconsin theatre circuit.

Though the Public Information Committee will furnish you with whatever aids you need to put your local celebration over, there is room for your ingenuity to supplement such aid.

The 50th Anniversary celebration offers every one of you a chance; you should not let it go to waste.

BOB O'DONNELL HEADS THE FIFTH WAR LOAN DRIVE

Robert J. O'Donnell, general manager of the Interstate and Texas Consolidated circuits, has been appointed chairman for the industry's participation in the Fifth War Loan Drive, which will take place between June 12 and July 8.

Coming immediately after the "star performance" of Charles Skouras, who was the industry's chairman for the Fourth War Loan Drive, Mr. O'Donnell will have a high mark to shoot at in his efforts to attain similar results. Yet the industry must, to a man, roll up its sleeves to help him, for it cannot fall down—it must make a success of the drive.

Every exhibitor understands, of course, that the purpose for which this loan is sought is to provide our armed forces with the planes, tanks, ammunition, ships and other implements needed to win the war, and because of it no exhibitor should fail to do his utmost to bring the drive to a successful conclusion.

**"The Hitler Gang" with Robert Watson,
Martin Kosleck and Victor Varconi**
(Paramount, no release date set; time, 99 min.)

Supposedly a factual, documented story of the rise to power of the Nazi leaders, and of their private lives, this historical-like film, though fairly interesting, is a questionable box-office entertainment. In all probability it may fare best in first-run theatres of large metropolitan centers, depending on how well its subject matter is exploited, for it lacks box-office names. The story covers the period from the Armistice in 1918 to the present day and traces the careers of Hitler and his associates, beginning with Hitler's release from a military hospital as a paranoiacal victim of shock. It shows that, with the collaboration of the German High Command, which planned to overthrow the Weimar Republic and restore militarism, Hitler, through political intrigue and double-cross, and by virtue of his gift of hysterical oratory, built the National Socialist Party into a political machine that eventually gained control of the government. In a subtle manner, the film hints at Hitler's supposed degeneracy, but it is void of sensationalism. Hitler is depicted as, not a brilliant leader, but an egotistical paranoiac, unaware that his destinies are guided by his cunning associates, who use him as a symbol of Nazi ideology, a means by which to hold the German nation together.

Among the film's highlights are the unsuccessful 1923 putsch against the state, when Hitler had the support of General Von Ludendorff; Hitler's supposed murder of his niece, with whom he purportedly had been in love; the burning of the Reichstag; and the blood purge of June, 1934, when Hitler, bowing to the demands of the High Command, killed many of the men who had put him in power.

Robert Watson, as Hitler, gives a good performance, as give Roman Bohnen, as Ernst Roehm; Martin Kosleck, as Joseph Goebbels; Victor Varconi, as Rudolph Hess; Luis Van Rooten, as Heinrich Himmler; Tonio Selwart, as Alfred Rosenberg; Alexander Granach, as Julius Streicher; and Alexander Pope, as Hermann Goering. Their makeup is so good that one feels as if he is watching the real characters.

Great care has gone into the sets to make them look authentic.

Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett wrote the screen play, G. B. DeSylva and Joseph Siström produced it, and John Farrow directed it.

Adult entertainment.

**"Man from Frisco" with Michael O'Shea
and Anne Shirley**

(Republic, no release date set; time, 91 min.)

A fairly good melodrama, revolving around an aggressive, but tactless young engineer, who establishes new methods of shipbuilding, despite the opposition of seasoned shipyard workers, whom he antagonizes by his overbearing attitude. While no mention is made of it, one assumes that the story is based on the shipbuilding career of Henry Kaiser. Better than average production values, and competent acting, are the film's outstanding features, for the story itself is ordinary, and its treatment routine. It should, however, hold the interest of an average audience, for, in addition to the actual scenes that depict modern shipbuilding methods, which are informative, the story has human appeal, some comedy, and a mild romance. The only situation that really thrills, comes near the end, where a huge pre-fabricated superstructure, while two giant cranes were raising it, falls on the ship's deck when the cables snap. Other than that sequence, there is very little excitement:—

Michael O'Shea, dynamic construction engineer with a reputation for doing the impossible, is sent to the Point Pleasant Shipyards to carry out his revolutionary ideas in the construction of ships. O'Shea's gruff attitude and general impatience antagonizes the workers and the townspeople, and cause Gene Lockhart, veteran superintendent of the yard, to resign. Anne Shirley, Lockhart's daughter, remains as O'Shea's secretary, despite her apparent dislike

for him. Dan Duryea, a foreman, who loved Anne, quits with Lockhart. O'Shea imports 4000 workers and their families, straining the town's facilities to the breaking point and causing more resentment among the townspeople. The attack on Pearl Harbor, however, prevents trouble between the old workers and the new, and introduces relative co-operation. As the weeks go by, O'Shea and Anne fall in love. One evening, Duryea goes to O'Shea's office to check on a blueprint and discovers O'Shea and Anne in an embrace. Angry, Duryea quits the job and neglects to check on the blueprint. As a result, a serious accident occurs, causing the death of Tommy Bond, Anne's younger brother. Blaming the accident on O'Shea's new methods of shipbuilding, the workers threaten to strike unless he leaves town. O'Shea, to prevent a slow-down in production, turns over the yard's management to Lockhart, and prepares to leave town. Duryea, realizing that the accident had been caused by his negligence, confides in Lockhart. The veteran superintendent dispatches Anne to find O'Shea, and she brings him back in time for the launching of the first Liberty ship, appropriately named after her brother.

Ethel Hill and Arnold Manhoff wrote the screen play, Albert J. Cohen produced it, and Robert Florey directed it. The cast includes Ray Walker, Stephanie Bachelor and others.

Morally suitable for all.

**"Gamblers' Choice" with Chester Morris,
Russell Hayden and Nancy Kelly**

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 68 min.)

A routine program melodrama, with better than average production values. The story is the familiar one of two pals—one a policeman and the other a racketeer—who both love the same girl, with the policeman's winning the girl in the end, after his pal becomes regenerated and sacrifices his life for him. It is developed without one new twist; nevertheless, it should satisfy those who enjoy pictures centering around racketeers, for the action is fast and exciting throughout. The story takes place in New York's Tenderloin district during 1911, and the sets and costumes are typical of that day:—

Chester Morris and Russell Hayden, boyhood chums, go different ways when they reach manhood. Morris becomes a croupier in Sheldon Leonard's gambling house, while Hayden becomes a lieutenant on the police force. Both, however, remain fast friends. Morris, a calculating person, quits Leonard and sets up a rival gambling palace with the backing of Lee Patrick, a rich widow, who loved him. Leonard, to compete with Morris, engages Nancy Kelly, a sensational singer, to entertain his guests. Visiting Leonard's club, Morris recognizes Nancy as the little girl with whom he and Hayden had played as children. He induces her to work for him instead of for Leonard. Both Morris and Hayden become friendly rivals for Nancy's love. Employing unscrupulous methods, Morris becomes a powerful political boss and is instrumental in promoting Hayden to a captaincy. Meanwhile Miss Patrick, jealous over Morris' attentions to Nancy, plots with Leonard to murder him. Their scheme backfires, however, when their henchmen kill a policeman instead of Morris. Roused by the death of one of his men, Hayden raids every gambling casino in the Tenderloin, including the one owned by Morris. Angered, Morris arranges for Hayden to be reduced to a patrolman. The Governor of the state, impressed by Hayden's record, appoints him to clean up the Tenderloin. The gambling bosses, to protect their interests, meet in Leonard's office and hit upon a plan to frame Hayden, so as to discredit him with the Governor. Nancy learns of the plan and appeals to Morris to protect Hayden. Realizing that Nancy loved Hayden, Morris prevents the frameup by shooting it out with Leonard. Both men die of mortal wounds.

Maxwell Shane and Irving Reis wrote the screen play, William Pine and William Thomas produced it, and Frank McDonald directed it. The cast includes Lloyd Corrigan, Lyle Talbot, Tommy Dugan and others.

Adult entertainment.

"Song of the Open Road" with Jane Powell, Bonita Granville and Jackie Moran

(United Artists, no release date set; time, 93 min.)

Very pleasant entertainment; it is light and puts one in an amiable mood. Although the story is rather thin, it should please most audiences, for it has both popular and classical music, the adolescent players are appealing, and there is considerable comedy as well as youthful romance. Jane Powell, a newcomer, around whom the story revolves, is a winsome young miss, delighting one with her charm, her fine singing voice, and her acting ability. The Liphart Four, a quartet of child acrobats, are exceptionally good. Hearty laughter is provoked by Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, as well as by W. C. Fields, who appear in a few short sequences. Sammy Kaye's orchestra and Chuck Faulkner's band handle the music:—

Because the demands on her time leave her no opportunity to associate with youths of her own age, Jane Powell, fourteen-year-old Hollywood star, writes a goodbye note to her mother (Rose Hobart), dyes her blonde hair brown and, assuming another name, goes to the Mossy Rock Youth Hostel, where she joins a group of youngsters, who aid the war effort by helping farmers with their crops. Jane's inability to do her share of the work, and her bungling efforts to straighten out the romantic troubles between Bonita Granville and Jackie Moran, cause the youngsters to ostracize her. When she reveals her identity and the youngsters ridicule her and call her a fabricator, she proves her statement by singing an aria. The youngsters, ashamed because they had treated her shabbily, take her to their hearts. Meanwhile, Jane's mother, who had been searching for her, arrives on the scene. The youths, understanding Jane's problem, hide her and convince Miss Hobart that she is not with them. Just then word is received that Moran's brother, owner of a big orange grove, will be ruined unless the oranges are picked before the start of a wind storm, which had been forecast for the following day. Jane makes her presence known to her mother and, with her consent, she goes to Hollywood, rounds up her entertainer-friends, and brings them to the grove. News of the celebrities' arrival is broadcast, and a large crowd of fans rush to the grove. There W. C. Fields, acting as master of ceremonies, talks the fans into helping pick the grove, while the celebrities entertain them.

Albert Mannheimer wrote the screen play, Charles R. Rogers produced it, and S. Sylvan Simon directed it. The cast includes Reginald Denny, Regis Toomey, the Condos Brothers, and others.

"Two Girls and a Sailor" with June Allyson, Gloria DeHaven and Jimmy Durante

(MGM, June; time, 124 min.)

An excellent musical; it should go over with the masses very well, for it is a pleasurable combination of music, comedy and romance, produced lavishly. Not only does the picture offer delightful entertainment, but it presents a captivating personality, June Allyson, whose charm should win everyone who sees her; she sings popular songs very well, and has unusual acting ability. The story, though not novel, is, thanks to the producer, consistently entertaining, for he has endowed it with good comedy situations, with human appeal, and with a charming romance. Jimmy Durante furnishes much of the comedy, provoking hearty laughter by his gags, songs, and antics. A highly amusing sequence is the one in which Gracie Allen gives a piano recital, playing with one finger, and off-key, to the accompaniment of a symphony orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Other highlights are songs by Lena Horne, Helen Forrest, Lina Romay, and Virginia O'Brien, each singing in her inimitable style; dancing by Ben Blue; a piano recital by Jose Iturbi; and the music of Harry James' and Xavier Cugat's orchestras:—

Eager to do their bit in the war effort, June Allyson and Gloria DeHaven, a song-and-dance sister team, entertain servicemen at their apartment after they finish their act at

a swank New York night-club. One night the girls invite to their apartment Tom Drake, a soldier, and Van Johnson, a sailor. Gloria, a flirtatious sort, attracts both men. Jean, a demure type, silently adores Johnson. Neither girl realized that Johnson was a millionaire. When the girls casually mention to him that a deserted warehouse next door would make an ideal canteen, Johnson quietly buys the property in their name, modernizes it, but does not let on that he is their benefactor. Jean eventually learns the truth and, believing that Johnson loved Gloria, graciously tries to bow out of the picture. Gloria, at first delighted that a millionaire was interested in her, soon comes to the realization that Johnson loved her sister. She brings them together, meanwhile making arrangements for her own marriage to Drake.

Richard Connell and Gladys Lehman wrote the screen play, Joe Pasternak produced it, and Richard Thorpe directed it. The cast includes Frank Jenks, Frank Sully, Henry Stephenson, Henry O'Neill, Carlos Ramirez, Donald Meek and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"The Story of Dr. Wassell" with Gary Cooper, Laraine Day, Signe Hasso and Dennis O'Keefe

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 136 min.)

As entertainment, this war melodrama is only fair, but the marquee value of Gary Cooper, and the fact that it was produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille, and in Technicolor, with his customary lavishness, should insure its box-office success. The story revolves around the heroic exploits of Dr. Corydon M. Wassell, USN, the Arkansas country doctor, who, when the Japanese gained control of Java, took charge of a group of badly wounded sailors, nursed them, and evacuated them safely to Australia, overcoming insurmountable odds in one of the most daring escapes of the war. In presenting Dr. Wassell's story, Mr. DeMille has mixed facts and fiction. The results, however, are unsatisfactory, for he has resorted largely to coincidence to tie in the different events, giving the story a cloak of artificiality despite the genuineness of most of the incidents. On the whole, the film is a spectacular war melodrama, combining war action, suspense, romance and comedy; but it lacks the exceptional—it presents little that has not been seen in countless other war pictures.

The story, part of which is told in flashbacks, opens before the war in Arkansas, where Dr. Wassell (Gary Cooper) decides to give up his practice to do medical research work in China for a missionary society. In China, Dr. Wassell falls in love with Madeline Day (Laraine Day), an American Red Cross nurse. Erroneously believing that she loved another doctor, he gives up his work in China and joins the Navy. With the outbreak of war, Dr. Wassell is assigned to Java. There he takes charge of a group of wounded sailors from the cruisers Marblehead and Houston, taking them to a Dutch military hospital in the interior. When he receives word that the Japanese had landed on Java, Dr. Wassell, in defiance of orders that only men who can fight are to be evacuated, makes an unsuccessful attempt to get his charges aboard the rescue ship. Left to the mercy of the enemy, Dr. Wassell determines to save his men. Despite numerous attacks by Japanese planes, he manages to keep his charges alive by his medical skill and inspires them by his own courage. Eventually, Dr. Wassell gets them aboard a tramp steamer and, after a hazardous voyage, brings them safely to Australia. There he is awarded the Navy Cross, and becomes reunited with Madeline.

Gary Cooper, as Dr. Wassell, gives a forceful performance. Good, too, are Signe Hasso, as a Dutch nurse, and Carol Thurston, as a native Javanese nurse, who provide additional romantic interest with the wounded men.

Alan LeMay and Charles Bennet wrote the screen play. Sidney Biddell was associate producer. The cast includes Carl Esmond, Philip Ahn, Stanley Ridges, Elliot Reid and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"And the Angels Sing" with Dorothy Lamour, Betty Hutton and Fred MacMurray
(Paramount, no release date set; time, 96 min.)

A pretty good comedy with music. In spite of the fact that the story is not particularly novel, it is consistently amusing because of the snappy dialogue and of the main characters' antics. And the predicaments the hero gets himself into as a result of his efforts to satisfy the romantic inclinations of two sisters without their learning of his duplicity are further causes for laughter. Betty Hutton is particularly good; each time she appears, she brightens things up considerably, provoking hearty laughter by what she says and by her exuberant singing. A "jitter-bug" sequence with Dorothy Lamour and with her "zoot-suited" boy-friend is one of the film's highlights. The musical sequences are staged attractively, and the music is tuneful:—

Betty Hutton, Dorothy Lamour, Diana Lynn, and Mimi Chandler, four sisters, make a good singing quartet, but each has other ambitions. All, however, wanted to earn enough money to buy their father (Raymond Walburn) a farm. When the girls earn ten dollars singing at a country night-club, Betty gambles the money and wins \$190. Learning of Betty's good fortune, and needing money to pay his orchestra, Fred MacMurray, band leader at the club, makes love to Betty and borrows the money from her on the pretext that he will employ her with his band as a singer. On the following morning, Betty learns that MacMurray had left town. The girls, angered, go to New York, determined to find him. Dorothy locates him in a Brooklyn night-club and demands that he return the money, but, before the evening is over, she, too, falls in love with him. Persuaded by MacMurray, Dorothy induces her sisters to sing with his orchestra, thus securing his position with the night-club. With Betty and Dorothy interested in him romantically MacMurray makes love to both of them in order to keep the quartet intact. But they eventually learn of his duplicity, quarrel, and break up the team. As a result, MacMurray loses his job. Weeks later, the girls find MacMurray and Eddie Foy, Jr., his pal, singing in a cheap cafe. They start a fight over the \$190, but their father takes matters in hand and induces them to rejoin MacMurray's band. Dorothy wins MacMurray, and Betty consoles herself with Foy.

Melvin Frank and Norman Panama wrote the screen play, E. D. Leshin produced it, and George Marshall directed it.

"Henry Aldrich Plays Cupid" with Jimmy Lydon and Vera Vague
(Paramount, no release date set; time, 65 min.)

This latest in the "Henry Aldrich" series is a fair program entertainment. As is the case with most of the pictures in this series, the story is extremely thin. Yet it may fit adequately in a double-feature program in neighborhood theatres, where patrons are not too discriminating, since the action moves steadily and there is plentiful comedy. This time "Henry's" troubles begin when he takes it upon himself to find a wife for his grouchy school principal. As is usual, his efforts result in numerous persons becoming involved in a series of awkward situations, many of which provoke hearty laughter. Vera Vague, as a lovelorn matron, adds much to the comedy:—

When Jimmy Lydon complains to his mother (Olive Blakeney) that Vaughn Glazer, the school principal, had been treating him unfairly, she innocently remarks that Glazer would not be a grouch if he had a wife. This gives Jimmy an idea and, together with Charlie Smith, his pal, he sets out to find Glazer a wife. The boys answer several matrimonial ads and, lest Glazer's photo discourage the prospective brides, they enclose in the letters a photo of Paul Harvey, a handsome Senator. Vera Vague, a lovelorn matron, comes to Centerville, arriving there just as Harvey steps off a train; he had come to town to investigate the mismanagement of a public project, of which John Litel, Jimmy's father, was chairman. Harvey is flabbergasted when Vera embraces him, and explains to reporters that the incident was probably arranged by Litel in an attempt to discredit him. The boys take Vera in hand and arrange for her to meet the principal. Matters become even more complicated when Barbara Pepper, a scheming blonde, arrives. She, too, embraces Harvey publicly. The boys confess the hoax to Barbara only to find themselves faced with a demand for \$500 as her price for silence. Meanwhile Harvey and Litel wrangle over the investigation and accuse one another of trickery because of the incidents involving Vera and Barbara. Faced with exposure, Jimmy goes to Harvey and tells

him the truth. It all ends with Litel being cleared of mismanaging the public project, Vera marrying Harvey, and Glazer reconciling with his wife, from whom he had been separated for over twenty years.

Muriel Roy Bolton and Val Burton wrote the screen play, Michel Kraike produced it, and Hugh Bennett directed it.

"Double Indemnity" with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray and Edward G. Robinson
(Paramount, no release date set; time, 106 min.)

A very good murder melodrama, although an unpleasant one. The story is demoralizing, for it shows the methods employed by the hero and heroine in planning and committing the murder of her husband, making it look like an accident so that they might collect the insurance money. Although it is not entertainment for children, adults who go in for this type of picture will find it to be one of the season's best melodramas, for it is filled with suspense and the plot developments are both fascinating and logical. The unpleasantness is owed to the fact that the main characters are ruthless persons. The performances are very good:—

Fred MacMurray, an insurance salesman, falls in love with Barbara Stanwyck and lets her involve him in a scheme to murder her husband (Tom Powers), with whom she was unhappy. After tricking Powers into signing a \$50,000 accident insurance policy, with a double indemnity clause, MacMurray plans to commit the perfect crime. Aided by Barbara, he murders Powers and ingeniously sets up the cause for his death, making it appear as if the man had been killed in a freak train accident. The crime defies police detection, but Edward G. Robinson, head claim adjuster for the insurance company and MacMurray's boss, figures out that it had been murder, and suspects Barbara; he felt that she had been aided by an accomplice, who, if found, would prove his charge. MacMurray, apprehensive of Robinson's ability to detect false insurance claims, loses his nerve and tries to break relations with Barbara, but she insists that he carry out his end of the bargain to collect the insurance money. Learning that Barbara planned to pin the murder on the innocent fiancé of her step-daughter (Jean Heather), and realizing that her love for him was superficial, MacMurray murders Barbara after she shoots him with the same thought (murder) in mind. Before dying of his wound, he makes to Robinson a full confession.

Billy Wilder and Raymond Chandler wrote the screen play, Joseph Sistrom produced it, and Mr. Wilder directed it. The cast includes Porter Hall, Fortunio Bonanova, Richard Gaines and others.

"Slightly Terrific" with Leon Errol
(Universal, May 5; time, 61 min.)

Unlike its title, this is a minor program musical with an appeal strictly to those who enjoy listening to popular music and watching dance numbers. In spite of the fact that the players try hard, they are hampered by trite and ridiculous story material. For this reason, they fail to make an impression. Leon Errol, cast in a dual role, reminiscent of the part he played in RKO's "Mexican Spitfire" series, provides the comedy, but except for one or two situations his antics provoke no more than a grin. Discriminating audience may be considerably bored with it:—

Mistaking James P. Tuttle (Leon Errol) for John P. Tuttle (also Leon Errol), his millionaire brother, Eddie Quillan, a young producer, induces James to back his musical revue. When James learns that his brother would be absent during the annual Stefanik, Ill., festival, which the millionaire always sponsored, he schemes to stage Quillan's revue at the festival. James transports the members of the show to Stefanik in his trailer and, posing as his millionaire brother, sees to it that they are given hotel accommodations and that they are featured on the festival program. All sorts of complications ensue when the wealthy brother arrives unexpectedly, causing James to hide in his room lest he be found out. After a series of events, in which the members of the cast, believing there is only one J. P. Tuttle, are held in a constant state of bewilderment because of the supposed changing moods of their backer, the millionaire unmasks his brother as the black sheep of the family and promises to back Quillan's show on Broadway.

Edward Dein and Stanley Davis wrote the screen play, Alexis Thurn-Taxis produced it, and Edward F. Cline directed it. The cast includes Betty Kean, Richard Lane, Donald Novis, Lillian Cornell, the Star Dusters, the Maritza Dancers, the Eight Rhythmeers and others.

Morally suitable for all.

Entered as second-class matter January 4, 1921, at the post office at New York, New York, under the act of March 3, 1879.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1944

No. 19

TOM CONNORS CLARIFIES A POLICY

Tom Connors, vice-president in charge of world-wide distribution of Twentieth Century-Fox films, has just come back from a trip during which he visited several of the company's exchanges and lunched with local exhibitors with a view to coming in direct contact with those who might have complaints against the company's sales policies and to accept suggestions from them for improvement.

During his peregrination the trade papers reported him as having stated that he has given his local men complete authority to make adjustments of the rentals paid by exhibitors for his company's pictures if an exhibitor should prove to the local branch manager that what he took in from a picture did not come up to a point that would leave him a fair profit.

After the Philadelphia meeting, some exhibitors expressed the feeling that, though his decision to let the local men make adjustments was praiseworthy, what they really needed was fair contracts so that they might not be compelled to go to the branch managers, hat in hand, to ask for adjustments, for they consider such a procedure a humiliation.

Upon his return from his trip, Mr. Connors invited the trade press to a luncheon at the Hotel Astor so that we might have an opportunity to ask him questions.

Naturally I grasped the opportunity to call Mr. Connors' attention to this grievance and asked him to give me an explanation. Mr. Connors assured me that no price is set on a theatre until the staff of the local exchange takes all factors into consideration and with a view to letting the exhibitor make, not only a good salary, but also a good profit.

There are times, Mr. Connors said, when a film may fail to bring in the revenue contemplated because of some unforeseen conditions such as those caused either by the weather or by some unexpected competition. In such an event, the local men are always ready to make a satisfactory adjustment.

I can say this, that Mr. Connors, during the questioning and answering, was very frank and always willing to reply candidly and to avoid sophistry. The only hope I have is that the local men will carry out the spirit of his wishes in every detail.

Even Willis Vance, that tough Cincinnati exhibitor, who publishes the Independent Exhibitors Forum bulletin, had something nice to say about Mr. Connors in his May 1 bulletin. He said partly:

"The charge of hoarding cannot be made against 20th Century-Fox. Although the company has reduced the number of features, it has but a reasonable backlog of product. The company has undergone an extensive revamping of its production department, and it is to be hoped that this will once more set the producing wheels in motion, full speed ahead."

Stating that "the company's sales representatives are continually bickering with exhibitors because of the extremely high allocations and terms," Mr. Vance expressed the hope that "perhaps Mr. Connors in his travels has noted the increasing dissatisfaction and will realize that something is wrong which can and should be corrected immediately, not by the adjustment method which is embarrassing and obligatory, but by pricing the product on a fair live-and-let-live basis."

STEFFES PLACES SUCCESS OF FIFTH WAR LOAN ABOVE HIS HEALTH

W. A. Steffes, popularly known as "Al," formerly president of Allied Theatre Owners of the Northwest and a prominent member of the board of directors of Allied States Association, who several years ago retired from organizational activities on account of ill health, has so regained his health that he has accepted the chairmanship of the Fifth War Loan Drive in the State of Minnesota. He was prevailed upon to accept this chairmanship by John J. Friedl, chairman of the War Activities Committee for the Minneapolis exchange area, who is serving as Fifth War Loan Campaign director.

Those who know "Al" feel confident that he will, not only reach the quota for his territory, but exceed it, for he is so well liked that no one serving under him will want to fall down on the job.

Bob O'Donnell, National Chairman, is highly pleased that Steffes should have come out of retirement, and attributes it to the urgency of the Fifth War Loan Campaign. Al told him that his health is of secondary consideration to the war effort.

TOUGH "PETE" WOOD IS SOFT

If any one from among the other side of the fence thinks that Pete Wood, executive secretary of the Independent Theatre Owners of Ohio, is all toughness and no softness, he had better revise his views. And here is the proof:

"Columbus, Ohio

"May 2, 1944

"Mr. P. S. Harrison

"Publisher, Harrison's Reports

"New York, 20, N. Y.

"Dear Pete:

"Supplementing the article in your issue of April 29 in which Mr. Myers says so many nice things about Herman Robbins and George Dembow, my only comment is:—Agreed!

"Cordially yours,

"P. J. WOOD, Secretary

**"Follow the Leader"
with the East Side Kids, Jack LaRue
and Joan Marsh**

(Monogram, June 3; time, 65 min.)

A pretty good addition to the "East Side Kids" series of program comedy-melodramas. This time the "Kids," under the leadership of Leo Gorcey, solve a series of warehouse robberies, including a murder, thus clearing one of their pals who had been unjustly accused of the crime. Despite a routine plot, it offers followers of the series the type of exciting action and comedy that they enjoy. Moreover, the story has substantially more heart interest than the stories of the previous "Kid" pictures:—

Leo Gorcey and Huntz Hall return to their neighborhood from an army camp, supposedly on a furlough. Actually, Gorcey had been honorably discharged because of a physical defect, but he tells no one of this. When Gorcey learns that Dave Durand, a member of his gang, was in jail, accused of stealing medical supplies from a warehouse where he worked, he decides to investigate. He notices that Billy Benedict, a new member of the gang, had an unusual amount of money on his person. Shrewdly boasting to Benedict that he was dishonorably discharged from the army for thievery, Gorcey gains the young man's confidence. Benedict, who was employed with Durand at the warehouse, confides to Gorcey that it was he, not Durand, who was responsible for the robberies. He reveals to Gorcey that Jack LaRue, operator of a night-club, where Joan Marsh, Gorcey's sister, worked as a cigarette girl, paid him handsomely for the stolen goods. Gabriel Dell, one of LaRue's henchmen, kills Benedict when he learns that Gorcey had been let in on the deal. After managing to get a job in the warehouse, Gorcey contacts Dell and arranges to help him obtain more stolen goods. Actually, Gorcey was working with the Army authorities in a secret plan to trap the gangsters. Supported by the members of his gang, Gorcey, with the aid of Joan and the police, captures the thugs as they take valuable medical supplies into the basement of LaRue's night-club. Durand is cleared of suspicion, and Gorcey is given a citation by the army.

William X. Crowley and Beryl Sachs wrote the screen play, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. Barney Sarecky was associate producer. The cast includes Mary Gordon, J. Farrell MacDonald, Gene Austin and the Sherrill Sisters, and others.

Morally suitable for all.

**"This Is the Life" with Donald O'Connor,
Susanna Foster and Peggy Ryan**

(Universal, June 2; time, 87 min.)

Although this is not as good as the last two or three comedies with music featuring Donald O'Connor, it is a satisfactory entertainment of program grade. Except for a few musical sequences in which O'Connor sings and dances with Peggy Ryan with their usual "jitterbug" exuberance, his antics are toned down considerably in his conventional role of a rejected adolescent suitor. He plays the part well, but one wishes that he were given more opportunity to display his comedy talents; it might have relieved the tediousness of the story, which lags considerably in spots. As a matter of fact, outside of his occasional bursts of comedy, and of the delightful singing of Susanna Foster, the proceedings are quite dull. Moreover, its running time is much too long for the story it has to tell:—

On her eighteenth birthday, Susanna Foster, reared in a small New England town, receives a modest inheritance, which enables her to travel to New York with her aunt (Dorothy Peterson), ostensibly to pursue a singing career. Actually, Susanna wanted to visit Patric Knowles, a distinguished army surgeon, with whom she had become in-

fatuated during his summer vacation in New England. Susanna's departure depresses Donald O'Connor, her childhood friend, who had sensed her infatuation for Knowles. To comfort the love-sick boy, Jonathan Hale, Donald's father, invents an errand on which to send him to New York. Once there Donald discovers that Susanna had become Knowles' fiancée, although it was obvious to him that Knowles had agreed to the engagement in a gallant effort to humor her. When Donald, by chance, meets Louise Allbritton, Knowles' divorced wife, he surmises that she still loved Knowles and decides to do something about it. He engineers a number of "co-incidental" meetings between the divorced couple, awakening their romantic interest in each other. As a result, Susanna comes to the realization that Louise, not she, was meant for Knowles. At a recital arranged by Knowles for her formal debut as a concert singer, Susanna is instrumental in effecting a complete reconciliation between Knowles and Louise. Meanwhile Donald had joined the army. Realizing that she really loved Donald, Susanna becomes reunited with him during a USO show at his camp.

Wanda Tuchock wrote the screen play, Bernard Burton produced it, and Felix Feist directed it. The cast includes Eddie Quillan, Frank Jenks, Ray Eberle and others.

Morally suitable for all.

**"The Black Parachute" with Larry Parks,
John Carradine and Osa Massen**

(Columbia, May 4; time, 66 min.)

A minor program war melodrama, with an appeal strictly for those action fans who have no regard for the plausibility of a plot. Discriminating audiences, however, will snicker at the ease with which an American newspaperman, aided by the "underground," disguises himself as a Nazi officer and rescues the king of a fictitious, conquered European country. The best that can be said for it is that the action moves along swiftly, and that it has some tense moments, but these are not enough to overcome the mediocrity of the material:—

En route home from the European war, Larry Parks, an American newspaperman, is prevailed upon by two "underground" patriots to fly to a Balkan kingdom to rescue their king (Jonathan Hale), who had been taken captive by the Nazis. Parks flies to the kingdom and bails out of the plane. He lands near a guerilla stronghold, and makes contact with the "underground." When a Nazi detachment attacks the guerillas in a mountain fight, Parks kills a German officer, dons his uniform, and makes his way to the castle where the king was held. There John Carradine, the commanding Nazi general, mistakes Parks for the dead German officer, who had been used by the Nazis to impersonate the voice of the king in broadcasts to the people. Osa Massen, Carradine's favorite and a "Quisling," suspects Parks. She gains his confidence by leading him to believe that she was a patriot. Through Jaen Bates, daughter of the "underground" leader, Parks sends the guerillas information that aids them to effect the rescue of the king. Meanwhile Carradine discovers that Parks is an imposter and throws him into a cell. Osa frees Parks and urges him to take her to the hideout where the guerillas had taken the king. Parks discovers too late that Osa had been leading Carradine and his soldiers to the hideout. The guerillas, however, kill Osa and spirit Parks and the king out of the country before the Nazis can stop them. Setting up a government-in-exile, the king broadcasts to his subjects and urges them to resist the Nazis.

Clarence Upson Young wrote the screen play, Jack Fier produced it, and Lew Landers directed it.

Morally unobjectionable.

**"Pardon My Rhythm" with Gloria Jean,
Patric Knowles and Marjorie Weaver**
(Universal, May 19; time, 61 min.)

This latest comedy with music to come off the Universal assembly-line should get by as a supporting feature in neighborhood and small-town theatres; it should appeal particularly to young folk. The story itself is unimportant, but it has comedy of the farcical type, romantic interludes, and peppy music of the popular variety. Gloria Jean, now a charming 'teen-aged miss, shows marked improvement in her acting ability, and continues to please with her delightful singing. Bob Crosby and his orchestra furnish the music:—

Gloria Jean, singer with a juvenile swing band that was competing in a national band contest, brings the youngsters to her home for rehearsals. The band pinned its hopes of winning the contest on Mel Torme, Gloria's sweetheart, who was an expert drummer. On the day of the state finals, Bob Crosby, one of the judges, becomes impressed with Torme's virtuosity. The band wins the contest, and Crosby, seeking Torme's services at a nominal salary, arranges with Marjorie Weaver, his girl-friend and vocalist, to lure the young man into signing a contract. Lest Torme leave the youngsters and hurt their chances of winning the contest, Gloria appeals to Patric Knowles, her father and successful playwright, to woo Marjorie away from Torme, and thus dissuade him from joining Crosby's orchestra. Knowles reluctantly agrees to the scheme because of Evelyn Ankers, his fiancée. By evincing an interest in Marjorie's acting ambitions, Knowles makes her forget, not only Torme, but also Crosby. Complications arise when Marjorie resigns as vocalist with Crosby's band, and Torme, peeved because Marjorie had thrown him over for Knowles, rejects the contract offered to him by Crosby and refuses to play with the youngsters in the national finals. To complicate matters further, Evelyn misunderstands when she comes upon Marjorie and Knowles rehearsing a torrid love scene from one of his plays. After a series of mixups Gloria, at the last moment, induces Torme to take his place with the youngsters, thus enabling them to win the national finals. Knowles and Evelyn become reconciled, and Marjorie resumes her career with Crosby's band.

Val Burton and Eugene Conrad wrote the screen play, Bernard W. Burton produced it, and Felix E. Feist directed it. The cast includes Walter Catlett, Patsy O'Connor and others.

Morally unobjectionable.

"Shake Hands with Murder"
**with Iris Adrian, Frank Jenks and
Douglas Fowley**
(PRC, April 22; time, 63 min.)

An entertaining murder mystery melodrama, with comedy. The plot is far-fetched and even silly; but, since the action moves along at a fast pace, and the situations are at times quite comical, the picture should serve its purpose well enough as a suitable filler in double-feature programs. The spectators' attention is held fairly well, for the identity of the murderer is not divulged until the end. The performances are engaging, and the production values fairly good:—

When Douglas Fowley, an investment company executive indicted on a charge of embezzlement, disappears, Iris Adrian, co-owner of a bail bond business, becomes concerned; her partner, Frank Jenks, had used all their money to bail Fowley out of jail. To save her firm from bankruptcy, Iris decides to find Fowley, turn him over to the police, and cancel the bail bond as a bad risk. Added to Iris' woes was the fact that Fowley's employer (Herbert Rawlinson) had been found murdered, and the police suspected Fowley of the crime. Iris catches up with Fowley at Rawlinson's mountain lodge. He convinces her of his in-

nocence and induces her to help him search for the securities he was accused of stealing; Fowley believed that they were hidden in the lodge. After a thorough search, they find the securities hidden in a secret wall compartment that had been rigged up as a booby trap; the opening of the compartment automatically set off a hidden gun pointed at the person opening the secret panel. Fowley barely escapes being shot. Convinced that a member of his firm's board of directors was the thief and murderer, Fowley tricks the board members into coming to the lodge. He asks them one by one to open the compartment, telling them that the missing securities were hidden within. All are willing to open it, except Stan Jolley, who reveals himself as the guilty person. Jolley draws a gun and threatens to shoot Fowley, but Iris, who had been hiding, distracts his attention, enabling Fowley to subdue him. Iris saves her investment, and wins Fowley as a husband.

John T. Neville wrote the screen play, and Donald C. McKean and Albert Herman produced it. Mr. Herman directed it.

Morally unobjectionable.

"Three Men in White"
**with Lionel Barrymore, Van Johnson,
Keye Luke and Marilyn Maxwell**
(MGM, June; time, 85 min.)

Followers of the "Dr. Gillespie" pictures should find this latest in the series a very satisfactory entertainment, for it is a pleasing blend of heart interest, comedy, and romance, despite the familiarity of the material. The story is a continuation of the friendly rivalry between Barrymore's two assistant internes, and of Barrymore's problem in selecting one of them as his sole assistant. There is plentiful comedy throughout; the laughter is provoked mainly by Barrymore's roguishness, and by his constant feuding with the hospital staff:—

Faced with the problem of choosing either Van Johnson or Keye Luke as his permanent assistant, Lionel Barrymore, head doctor of Blair Hospital, decides to give each interne a difficult medical case so as to select the one that showed the better judgment. Luke is assigned to diagnose and cure the illness of a little girl, who suffered convulsions because of a sugar allergy. Meanwhile Johnson meets Ava Gardner, apparently intoxicated, and brings her to the hospital for treatment. He discovers that the girl had been drugged. Ava, however, refuses to reveal her identity, and leaves the hospital. Sensing something wrong, Johnson investigates the girl and discovers that she had broken her engagement to the boy she loved, in order to be with her crippled mother, a victim of incurable arthritis. Johnson chooses Ava's mother as his test case. Luke, aided by hints from Barrymore, makes fine progress with his case, but Johnson is unsuccessful in his efforts to help Ava's mother. Through a friendly tip from Luke, Johnson learns that his patient's legs are of uneven length, and that specially constructed shoes would relieve her pain and permit her to walk and take care of herself, even though her ailment could not be cured. One the day set for Barrymore to choose his assistant, Johnson disappears from the hospital, and leaves Barrymore a note stating that Luke is the better man for the post. Johnson was unaware of the fact that Barrymore, to retain both of his proteges, had arranged for Luke's appointment as a lieutenant in the Chinese Medical Corps, to be assigned to him for research work. With the aid of Marilyn Maxwell, a rich social worker who loved Johnson, Barrymore, together with members of the hospital staff, prevents Johnson from leaving town and brings him back to the hospital.

Martin Berkely and Harry Ruskin wrote the screen play, and Willis Goldbeck directed it. The cast includes Alma Kruger, "Rags" Raglund, Nell Craig, Walter Kingsford, and others.

Morally suitable for all.

THE NEW TAX ON AMUSEMENTS OPPRESSIVE

Part of a news item that has appeared in the Thursday, May 4, issue of the New York Times reads as follows:

"Attendance at legitimate theatrical productions has been on the decline since April 1, when the Federal admission tax jumped from 10 to 20 per cent, and theatre managers believe the tax increase is responsible, Lee Shubert, producer and theatre operator, said yesterday. All but the smash hits have felt the slump, he said . . .

"Meyer Davis, band leader and an investor in legitimate shows, in an interview yesterday, described the tax increase as 'destructive' and predicted that it would force the closing of at least ten legitimate shows within the next few weeks. He said that one large booking agency had advised him that theatre attendance last Monday, a balmy spring evening, was the lowest Monday night in years . . ."

The Times said that night clubs and cabarets have been hit by the new tax schedule, which is 30%, harder than the theatres.

It seems too early yet to evaluate the effect the 20% tax has had on picture theatres, but organization leaders should begin gathering the necessary information so that, if the added tax has hit the picture theatres hard, they may join forces with the theatrical and night club leaders for immediate action by Congress. A tax is put on business for revenue; but, when the revenue derived from a new tax schedule is less than the intake under the old tax schedule, such a tax should be modified.

In view of the fact that Allied States Association is an exhibitor organization with the largest independent exhibitor membership, you should send your facts either to Mr. Martin Smith, president of the organization, at 519 Main Street, Toledo 5, Ohio, or to Mr. Abram F. Myers, general counsel, at 729 Fifteenth Street, N. W. Washington, D. C. The voice of these leaders, joined with the voice of every regional organization not affiliated with Allied States, should exert a powerful influence upon the councils of those who may attempt the modification of the tax.

"The Adventures of Mark Twain" with Fredric March and Alexis Smith

(Warner Bros., no national release date; time, 130 min.)

Warner Brothers deserves praise for the intelligent and sincere way in which they have presented the story of Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, one of America's greatest humorists. It is an excellently produced, heart-warming human-interest drama, well acted and directed. Frederic March portrays Twain with deep understanding. The picture's appeal, however, will be directed chiefly to the high-brows, who have read Mark Twain's works and love them, and not to the rank and file, for the action is slow and the story, which is episodic, is told mostly by dialogue. The story takes in the seventy-five years span of Twain's life and covers his adventures as an imaginative youngster, river pilot, humorist, author, and his experiences as a gold miner and a publisher. The romance between Twain and his wife, before and after their marriage, is appealing. The film is replete with humorous incidents, many of which are well known to the American public.

The story opens with Twain's birth in 1835 as Halley's Comet flashes across the heavens. Except for an extraordinary imagination, Twain showed no sign of his coming greatness during his boyhood days in Hannibal, Mo., with his boon companions, Tom Sawyer and Huckelberry Finn. Always fascinated by the Mississippi River, Twain, in his early youth, becomes a cub pilot and studies the river's every whim. He becomes a full-fledged pilot in later years and, on one of his trips, makes the acquaintance of Charles Langdon (Bill Henry), a wealthy young man, by restoring to him personal possessions that had been stolen by a pick-pocket, among which was a photograph of Olivia Langdon (Alexis Smith), Charles' sister. Twain determines to make

her his bride. To acquire the wealth he felt was necessary to approach Olivia, Twain goes West in search of gold. He is unsuccessful as a miner, but his luck changes when he becomes a newspaper reporter in Virginia City, Nevada, where he writes the story of a frog-jumping contest, in which he had participated. The story, published in every newspaper in the country, wins the public's fancy and launches Twain on his literary career. He gains fame as a humorist and, at a lecture, meets Olivia. He pursues her and succeeds in making her his bride, despite the opposition of her family. Spurred on by Olivia, Twain writes some of his most famous stories. His writings bring him great wealth. He finances an automatic typesetter, which fails to work, and founds a publishing house, which he operates in an unbusinesslike manner. Both ventures lead him into bankruptcy. To pay his creditors, Twain, now an aging man, embarks on a lecture tour of the world and succeeds in liquidating his debt. Shortly thereafter, Olivia dies, and Twain reaches the apex of his career when Oxford University confers on him an honorary degree. Bedridden, Twain dies in 1910 in his Stormfield, Conn., home, just as Halley's comet streams across the sky.

Alan LeMay wrote the screen play, Jesse L. Lasky produced it, and Irving Rapper directed it. The cast includes Donald Crisp, Alan Hale, C. Aubrey Smith, John Carradine, Percy Kilbride and many others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Allergic to Love" with Martha O'Driscoll, Noah Beery, Jr. and David Bruce

(Universal, no release date set; time, 65 min.)

A moderately entertaining program comedy-farce. The story itself is familiar and at times silly, but it has been given a few novel twists and there are several situations that provoke considerable laughter. And, since the action is kept moving at a steady pace, one's interest does not lag. Like most comedies of this type, the story does not have much human appeal; nor are the actions of the characters such as to awaken the spectator's sympathy. The performances are, however, satisfactory:—

The romantic ups-and-downs of Martha O'Driscoll, whose father owned a motor company, and of Noah Beery, Jr., whose father owned an airplane company, cause the stock of both companies to either rise or drop, because of the public's interest in the possible amalgamation of the two companies. Ignoring the elaborate plans that had been made for their wedding, the young couple elope. David Bruce, a young physician and fraternity brother of Beery's, witnesses their marriage. On the following day, Martha and Beery accompany Bruce to a boat to see him off on a trip to South America. The newlyweds suddenly decide to remain aboard the boat and make the cruise their honeymoon. Bruce, to celebrate their decision, visit the ship's store and buys a bottle of perfume for Martha and a shaving kit for Beery. Shortly after sailing, Martha suffers severe sneezing attacks, which recur whenever Beery is near her. As long as she and Beery are separated, Martha remains free of the attacks. In Rio de Janeiro Bruce suggests that Martha accompany him to a sanitarium in Buenos Aires that specialized in allergies. Beery, unable to accompany her because of business reasons, reluctantly permits her to go. Rumors that Martha had left him for Bruce rouses Beery's jealousy. He rushes to Buenos Aires, quarrels with Martha, and threatens to divorce her. His presence causes a recurrence of Martha's sneezing attacks. Through a subtle ruse, Martha lures Beery to another sanitarium, where Bruce and other doctors subject him to many tests in an unsuccessful effort to learn the cause of Martha's allergy. By accident, Martha herself discovers that the shaving soap Bruce had presented to Beery was the cause of her spells. The young couple become reconciled, and Beery vows never to shave.

Warren Wilson wrote the screen play and produced it. Edward Lilley directed it. The cast includes Franklin Pangborn, Maxie Rosenbloom, Fuzzy Knight, Henry Armetta and others.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1944

No. 20

A GET-RICH-QUICK POLICY

I have received from an out-of-town exhibitor for comment the following letter, which was sent by Rube Jackter, Columbia's Assistant Sales Manager, to all Columbia branch managers:

"COLUMBIA PICTURES CORPORATION

"729 Seventh Avenue

"New York, N. Y.

(Name and address omitted) "May 1st, 1944

"By this time you have already been advised of our plans to improve our income on 'Cover Girl.' In every situation where 'Cover Girl' is played flat rental, we have asked you to improve the playing time on a 100% pro-rata basis.

"However, as we continue to see the sensational business 'Cover Girl' is doing, it becomes more and more evident that our present flat rental terms fall far short of what we should be receiving on this production.

"Therefore, in order to come closer to what we are entitled to get from 'Cover Girl' where it has been sold on a flat rental basis, we are asking you to secure 25% more on this picture than you received on 'The More the Merrier' out of your total number of flat rental situations.

"What we want you to do immediately is to set up from your records a list of the rentals received from every flat rental account in your office on 'The More the Merrier,' and then add 25% to that rental. This will be the basis for reaching your quota in the flat rental situations on 'Cover Girl.'

"We are not particularly concerned whether you get this increase in each situation or whether you get it on an over-all basis in increased rentals, increased playing time or additional runs in the flat rental situations. Our main interest is that you reach the new quota set up for 'Cover Girl' in the flat rental spots.

"Will you please confirm your understanding of the above, and go over this plan immediately with your organization. Also, will you please send us a report every two weeks on the progress your office is making in this direction.

"Kind personal regards.

"Sincerely yours,

"RUBE JACKTER

"Asst. Sales Manager"

For reasons well understood, I have omitted the name and address of the branch manager as well as of the exhibitor so as to prevent the possibility of any consequences.

In order that you may realize the full significance of Columbia's ruthlessness in this matter, let me remind you that "Cover Girl" is one of the three Rita Hayworth pictures that Columbia failed to deliver to its 1942-43 contract-holders, but sold to its 1943-44 customers. The three Rita Hayworth pictures were, as most of you know, part of the nine top productions Columbia promised but failed to deliver in the 1942-43 season.

After failing to keep its promises, and after selling "Cover Girl" to many exhibitors twice, Columbia now comes along and seeks to mulct them by instructing its salesmen to add 25% to what these exhibitors paid for "The More the Merrier," its best production for 1942-43.

And Columbia does not care what methods its salesmen employ to exact the increased rental out of the exhibitor. Read again the fifth paragraph of the Jackter letter, and you will be convinced of the fact:

We are not particularly concerned whether you get this increase in each situation or whether you get it on an over-all basis in increased rentals, increased playing time or additional runs in the flat rental situations. Our main interest is that you reach the new quota set up for 'Cover Girl' in the flat rental spots.

In other words, the salesmen have been told in effect: "You must meet that new quota, and we don't give a darn what methods you use to meet it."

The following is what might happen. If your neighboring exhibitor should be a tough one and in a position to resist the salesman's demands, the salesman will concentrate on you in an effort to wear you down until you become so weary that you are willing to pay, not only the 25% increase allocated to you, but also the 25% increase that he failed to obtain from your neighbor. Hence, instead of paying 25% more than you paid for "The More the Merrier," you might be made to pay anywhere from 50% to 100%, and even more, the percentage depending on how many of your neighbors were in a position to resist the salesman's demands.

And that is not all: the instructions from the home office are so broad that they give to the salesmen an opportunity to play favorites. For example, if your past relations with a particular salesman had been marred by disputes, or if he doesn't like the color of your necktie, there is no telling how far he will go in his demands.

(Continued on last page)

**"Between Two Worlds" with John Garfield,
Sydney Greenstreet and Paul Henreid**

(Warner Bros., May 20; time, 112 min.)

This story was produced in 1931 under the title, "Outward Bound," which was taken from the Sutton-Vane stage play, which created a sensation when it was first presented in London. Because "Outward Bound" was produced when all-talking pictures were still new, it impressed the picture critics as being a fine picture, and one out of the ordinary. Yet it made a box-office failure. Before showing "Between Two Worlds" to the reviewers, the Warner Bros., publicity staff showed them "Outward Bound" first, and then "Between Two Worlds," so as to give them a chance to see the progress of the art. It seems as though those critics who had seen "Outward Bound" in 1931 had to confess that, from the present day point of view, the picture did not appeal to them as it did in 1931. And "Between Two Worlds," despite the progress of the technique, is not any better—worse in some respects. "Outward Bound" proved a box-office failure, and it is doubtful whether the new version will fare better, despite its artistry, for the reason that those who seek to be entertained by pictures do not relish seeing pictures in which the characters are dead people. It is true that two pictures dealing with dead people have made a box-office success, but both these have been comedies, whereas "Between Two Worlds" is a serious, and rather depressing, picture.

The story deals with people who find themselves on a fog-shrouded boat going to an undisclosed destination, and who eventually come to the realization that they are dead. Most of them had taken their own lives. Two of the newcomers, a young boy and a young girl, are desperately in love with each other; they had committed suicide by gas. But while they were on the boat, those in life had notified the police about their suicide, and firemen with pulmotors rushed to the scene. Fresh air was let into the room by a window which had been broken accidentally, and the firemen were able, by the use of the pulmotors to bring the young couple back to life.

The alterations of the original play have not been radical.

The picture was produced by Mark Hellinger and directed by Edward A. Blatt from a screen play by Daniel Fuchs.* The cast includes George Tobias, George Coulouris, Edmund Gwenn, Faye Emerson, Eleanor Parker and others.

There are no objectionable situations in it, but it is hardly a picture for children under 15.

**"Gaslight" with Ingrid Bergman,
Charles Boyer, and Joseph Cotten**

(MGM, May; time, 114 min.)

An excellent psychological thriller; it will appeal to the intelligentsia because of the fine direction and acting, and to the rank and file because of the sustained suspense and the general tenseness of the story. Based on Patrick Hamilton's stage play, which is currently playing on Broadway under the title of "Angel Street," the story revolves around a fiendish criminal who, under the guise of kindness, tries to drive his wife insane in an effort to prevent detection of a murder he had committed years previously, and to obtain a fortune in hidden jewels. The mood of the story is one of brooding terror and cumulative sus-

pense, in which Miss Bergman's resistance is gradually worn down as Boyer, by accusing her of petty misdeeds, which he had pre-arranged himself, slowly tortures her and convinces her that she is really losing her mind. The manner in which Joseph Cotten, as a detective, tracks down Boyer leads up to an exciting climax. The action takes place in England, during the Victorian period, and the production values are first rate:—

At the request of Charles Boyer, her husband, whom she had just married, Ingrid Bergman opens her London home, which had been left to her by her aunt, a famous singer, who had been murdered mysteriously twenty years previously. The house had been closed since her death. Within a few months after their marriage, Ingrid becomes frightened and concerned over the actions of Boyer. He constantly nags her, accuses her of things she does not remember doing, and uses different devices to lead her to believe that her mind was failing. Life becomes intolerable for Ingrid when Boyer disgraces her publicly by accusing her of stealing his watch while both were attending a smart London musicale. Ingrid's hysteria is noticed by Joseph Cotten, a young Scotland Yard detective, who, in his boyhood days, had been a great admirer of Ingrid's aunt. Cotten, who had his own theories about the famous singer's unsolved murder, quietly investigates Ingrid's peculiar behavior and learns of Boyer's attempts to drive her insane. Keeping a careful check on Boyer's movements, Cotten gains entrance into the house one evening while Boyer was absent. He wins Ingrid's confidence and assures her that she was not going mad but that she was the victim of a diabolical plot by which Boyer hoped to dispose of her by slowly driving her insane and committing her to an institution, thus gaining for himself a free hand to search the house thoroughly for her dead aunt's hidden jewels, a fortune Ingrid knew nothing about. After rifling Boyer's desk and discovering evidence that definitely identifies him as the murderer of Ingrid's aunt, Cotten traps Boyer in the attic of the house and exacts from him a confession of the crime.

John Van Druten, Walter Reisch and John L. Balderston wrote the screen play, Arthur Hornblow, Jr., produced it, and George Cukor directed it. The cast includes Dame Mae Whitty, Angela Lansbury, Barbara Everest and others. Adult entertainment.

**"The Scarlet Claw" with Basil Rathbone
and Nigel Bruce**

(Universal, May 26; time, 75 min.)

A fair addition to Universal's series of mystery melodramas based on the adventures of "Sherlock Holmes"; it should have no trouble satisfying as a supporting feature. This time "Holmes" uses his amazing powers of deduction to unravel several murders committed by a mystic killer, a ghostly monster who runs amok on the Canadian marshes and terrifies the natives of a French-Canadian village. Like most of the stories in the series, this one, too, is far-fetched, but it has enough action and suspense to sustain one's interest all the way through:—

The reappearance on the fog-shrouded Canadian marshes of the legendary monster of La Morte Rouge, a village near Quebec, frightens the townspeople. At a meeting of the Royal Canadian Occult Society, in Quebec, Paul Cavanaugh, an English nobleman, who lived in the village, is unable to convince Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone) that psychic phenomena

was the basis of the crimes committed by the murderous apparition. In the midst of the meeting, word arrives that Cavanaugh's wife had been murdered by the "monster." Holmes, together with Dr. Watson (Nigel Bruce), his friend, goes to La Morte Rouge to investigate. He searches the treacherous marshes and narrowly escapes death at the "monster's" hands, himself. He manages, however, to obtain a clue that convinces him that the monster was one of the townspeople in disguise. Through further investigation Holmes establishes that the killer was a paranoiac ex-actor, an escaped murderer, who sought vengeance on a group of people connected with his conviction, among whom was Cavanaugh's wife, who had been a former actress. After several subsequent killings, Holmes succeeds in trapping the murderer and ridding the townspeople of their fears.

Edmund L. Hartman and Roy William Neill wrote the screen play, and Mr. Neill produced and directed it. The cast includes Arthur Hohl, Lou Harding, Miles Mander and others. Morally unobjectionable.

A POLICY OTHER DISTRIBUTORS SHOULD EMULATE

Under the heading, "Analysis of Product and Policy," Willis Vance, the Cincinnati exhibitor and publisher of the "Independent Exhibitors Forum," has this to say about MGM and Bill Rodgers in his May 8 Forum:

"For twenty years, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has been one of the major film companies, and for many of those years MGM has been the top company. Leadership implies responsibility, and MGM has not been a shirker. Both in the production and distribution, the company has been a leader. Since MGM is celebrating its 20th anniversary in a few weeks, it is fitting and proper that this organization felicitates the company and wishes it continued success for many more years.

"MGM's product has been the backbone of the countless theatres. Its success has also been the success of many exhibitors. While in 1942-43, the product did not measure up to one or two other companies insofar as top pictures are concerned, the program product was of very good quality. The present season, comprising thus far, two blocks of twelve pictures each, has brought out four top features, 'Thousands Cheer,' 'A Guy Named Joe,' 'Lassie Come Home,' and 'Salute to the Marines.' Possibly the only criticism one can make of some MGM features is their excessive length.

"The company does an excellent job of selling its pictures to the public. Publicity includes national and local radio programs, national magazine advertising, advance newspaper ads, etc.

"So much for the product—we can analyze the policy by first writing about the men who put it into effect. No other man in the entire motion picture industry commands the respect and loyalty of both exhibitors and his own employees as does William F. Rodgers, MGM's general sales manager. He is a tireless leader and as is the case with truly big men, he is sympathetic and understanding to the problems of the little man. One cannot ask for more. The three sales managers and the various district managers are all of unquestioned ability and extremely high calibre. H. M. Richey is an excellent public relations man. The branch managers are given executive powers and their judgement in approving deals and mak-

ing adjustments is not questioned. The local leader is E. M. Booth, who has been the Cincinnati territory manager for 17 years. Serving hundreds of accounts, he has survived individual and organizational onslaughts and castigations, and yet, he has proved to his company that he has done a good job for 17 years. For MGM could not be the 'friendly company' were Eddie Booth to be anything but a 'right guy.' We hope he is here for 17 more years, not that he is a sucker, but he is a reflection of the Bill Rodgers' policy of friendly business.

"Like every other company, MGM has made mistakes; it has oversold in some cases, but it has backed up its work. It makes adjustments when they are deserved. It has confused exhibitors because of its method of blind selling, but thus far it has not taken advantage of blind selling, knowing that exhibitors have confidence in the company, and that this confidence must remain for MGM to continue its leadership.

"Were MGM's calming influence not at hand to check the greedy, selfish and utterly ruthless demands of some of the other companies, exhibitors would either be in extremely tough circumstances or out of business. We hope that Leo the Lion roars for many more years."

MONOGRAM FOR BETTER PICTURES

On May 2nd, Trem Carr, production head of Monogram Pictures, gave a luncheon to the trade in which he stated that the new policy of the production department is to cooperate closely with the distribution department. The heads of the two departments get together to discuss the proposed purchase of a story, and unless they see eye to eye as to its production as well as selling possibilities, the story is not purchased.

Again, if a story possesses possibilities by proper treatment and they purchase the story, they work together so that the treatment that is given to the story may bring the best selling results possible.

Mr. Carr attributes the improvement of its product to this policy.

Another announcement that Mr. Carr made was to the effect that their production will be flexible. In other words, they will be ready to produce more pictures than they have been producing if the market can absorb them.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is glad that Monogram is ever alert to improve its product, for a time may come when the business will not be so lush, and picture quality will count much more than it counts today.

REPUBLIC FORGES ON

Herbert Yates, head of Consolidated Laboratories, which controls Republic Pictures, has announced that, during the 1944-45 season, Republic will produce 68 feature pictures, at an expenditure of \$17,750,000, in addition to the \$2,700,000, which has been set aside for advertising and exploitation.

The announcement that Republic will produce sixty-eight feature pictures, coming at a time when other companies are reducing the number of pictures they will produce during the 1944-45 season, cannot help encouraging the independent exhibitors.

In the last few years Republic, under the guidance of Herbert Yates, has made so great a progress that it can rightfully be considered as one of the major companies.

HARRISON'S REPORTS does not advise against your giving "Cover Girl" twice the playing time that your contract calls for, if you can make a reasonable profit, but it does advise against permitting Columbia to increase either your playing time or your agreed rentals, thus establishing a dangerous precedent, unless Columbia agrees to permit you, wherever you have contracted for a picture and it has proved in other theatres to be a flop, to decrease the number of playing days with a proportionate rental allowance for the "dropped" days. That would be a fair exchange of courtesies.

But can Columbia be fair to you? Judging by the number of pictures it has withheld from one season and sold them either to you or to some other exhibitor in a subsequent season for higher terms, I doubt it. And when it attempts to obtain more rental on "Cover Girl" not only from prospective customers, but also from exhibitors to whom "it has been sold" on a flat rental basis, I am sure that Columbia does not want to be fair.

Those of you who might consider giving "Cover Girl" extended playing time would do well to take into consideration, before agreeing on rental terms, the fact that the picture may be given over-extended playing time in the runs prior to your run. As all of you undoubtedly know, over-extending the playing time of a picture serves to "milk" it dry and to decrease its potential income for the subsequent-run exhibitor. Consequently, some of you may find yourselves in the unfortunate position of being committed to an extended run at increased rental terms, without sufficient patronage to take care of even a normal run, at normal rentals.

"Cover Girl" has just completed a highly successful six weeks' engagement at the Radio City Music Hall, in this city, and, from all indications, it should turn out to be one of the top box-office pictures of the season. If ever Columbia "muffed" an opportunity to get back into the good graces of the exhibitors, it is now—through its failure to establish on this picture an exhibitor favoring sales policy. Here was a chance for Columbia to tell its customers: "We hope this good picture will help make up for some of our bad ones, as well as for those we failed to deliver."

If those of you who still have Columbia's announcement of its 1943-44 program will examine it, you will find the following statement over the signature of Abe Montague, Columbia's general sales manager: "Proud as we are of the record we are making we know the future *will exceed it*."

And how!

WILL COLUMBIA PERFORM A MIRACLE?

Just to show you how Columbia deals with its customers, let us review the promises made by Abe Montague early in February, when, in connection with Columbia's annual sales campaign, which terminates on June 22, he announced a group of features his company would release during the period covered by the campaign.

I have before me Columbia's release schedule as of May 1, which contains a listing of all features released and to be released up to July 6. Omitting those pictures listed in the release schedule, I find that, among the important pictures promised for release during the sales campaign, Columbia has failed to set

dates for the following: "Tonight and Every Night," a Technicolor picture starring Rita Hayworth; "Road to Yesterday," starring Irene Dunne; and a Kay Kyser musical.

"Tonight and Every Night," according to the reports in the trade papers, was to have gone before the cameras on May 8th, with a 79 days shooting schedule. Accordingly, barring mishaps, the production should be completed some time in August, which means that it will not be ready for release until late in the fall. "Road to Yesterday" has not yet been put into production. Yet both these pictures were promised for release by June 22.

The Kay Kyser picture is now in production. Whether or not it will be released this season is as questionable as a Columbia promise.

Here are some more facts. They are, in the opinion of HARRISON'S REPORTS, a pretty definite indication of how far Columbia will go in either keeping or breaking its promises to the 1943-44 contract-holders. Promised on the 1943-44 program and as yet undelivered are the following important productions: "Tonight and Every Night" and "Gone with the Wind," both in Technicolor, starring Rita Hayworth; "The Impatient Years," with Jean Arthur; "Road to Yesterday," with Irene Dunne; "The Life of Al Jolson"; "At Night We Dream," with Paul Muni; and "Knights Without Armor."

Of these seven important production, three—"Road to Yesterday," "The Life of Al Jolson," and "Knights Without Armor"—have not been started and, should a start be made on them within the next few months, it is doubtful whether they will be released on the 1943-44 program. "At Night We Dream," the Paul Muni picture, was completed early in March. Columbia has been unusually quiet about this picture; it did not mention it as one of the productions to be released during the sales campaign, nor has it set a release date for later on in the season. The picture is completed. Why is it being held back? "The Impatient Years," the Jean Arthur picture, has been in production for some time, and "Tonight and Every Night," as said, was to have gone before the cameras on May 8.

In view of the fact that Columbia's release schedule is set up to July 6, which is only seven weeks before the close of the 1943-44 season, it is hardly probable that Columbia will release any of the aforementioned pictures during that period, particularly since the remaining time of the season will be mid-summer, when theatre attendance declines. What it will release will probably be of program grade.

Within the next six weeks Columbia should make an announcement of its 1944-45 program. It does not take the powers of a clairvoyant to predict that most of the aforementioned pictures will be offered again on the new program, some for the second time, and others for the third.

HARRISON'S REPORTS hopes, for your sake, that it will be compelled to retract its predictions by Columbia's living up to its promises, but, having the utmost confidence that Columbia will maintain its unbroken record of broken promises, it feels that no need for retraction will arise.

This paper will be happy to retract its predictions if Columbia will perform the miracle of adopting a new policy—a policy of delivering pictures as promised. Such a miracle is well within Columbia's power to perform.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR FEATURES

Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

5013 Hey, Rookie—Miller-Parks	Mar. 9
5039 Two-Man Submarine—Savage-Neal	Mar. 16
5205 Sundown Valley—Starrett (55 m.).....	Mar. 23
5032 The Whistler—Dix-Stuart	Mar. 30
Cover Girl—Hayworth-Kelly	Apr. 6
5015 Jam Session—Ann Miller	Apr. 13
5028 Girl in the Case—Carter-Lowe.....	Apr. 20
5206 Wyoming Hurricane—Russell Hayden (58 min.)	Apr. 20
The Black Parachute—Carradine-Parks.....	May 4
Once Upon a Time—Grant-Blair.....	May 11
Underground Guerrillas—English cast.....	May 18
Riding West—Starrett	May 18
Stars on Parade—Merrick-Parks.....	May 25
Address Unknown—Lukas-Stevens	June 1
They Live in Fear—Kruger-Parrish.....	June 15
Secret Command—O'Brien-Landis	June 22
The Last Horseman—Hayden.....	June 22
She's a Soldier Too—Bondi-Barker.....	June 29
Mr. Winkle Goes to War—Robinson.....	July 6

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 6

413 Thousands Cheer—Grayson-Kelly	January
414 Cross of Lorraine—Aumont-Kelly.....	January
415 Lost Angel—O'Brien-Craig	January
417 Cry "Havoc"—Sullivan-Sothorn	February
422 Song of Russia—Taylor-Peters	February
490 Madame Curie—Garson-Pidgeon	February
416 A Guy Named Joe—Tracy-Dunne.....	March
418 Rationing—Beery-Main	March
419 Broadway Rhythm—Murphy-Simms	March
420 See Here, Private Hargrove.....	March
421 Heavenly Body—Powell-Lamarr	April
423 Swing Fever—Kay Kyser.....	April

Block 7

424 Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble—Rooney.....	May
425 Gaslight—Boyer-Bergman-Cotten	May
426 Meet the People—Ball-Powell.....	May
427 Three Men in White—Barrymore.....	June
428 Two Girls and a Sailor—James-Durante.....	June
Special	
466 Tunisian Victory—Documentary	April 23

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

321 Sweethearts of the U.S.A.—Merkel-Novis...	Mar. 18
363 Arizona Whirlwind—Trail Blazers (59 m.)...	Mar. 18
353 Partners of the Trail—J. M. Brown (55 m.)...	Apr. 1
301 Lady Let's Dance—Belita	Apr. 15
314 Hot Rhythm—Lowery-Drake	Apr. 22
364 Law Men—J. M. Brown.....	May 6
322 Detective Kitty O'Day—Jean Parker.....	May 13
321 The Chinese Cat—Sidney Toler.....	May 20
312 Follow the Leader—East Side Kids.....	June 3
365 Sonora Stage Coach—Trail Blazers.....	June 10
Return of the Ape Man—Lugosi-Carradine...	June 17
355 Range Law—J. M. Brown.....	June 24
Johnny Doesn't Live Here Anymore—Simon- Ellison-Terry	June 24
Call of the Jungle—Ann Corio.....	July 1

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 4

4316 The Navy Way—Lowery-Parker.....	
4317 The Hour Before the Dawn—Lake-Tone.....	
4318 You Can't Ration Love—Johnston-Rhodes.....	

Block 5

4321 And the Angels Sing—MacMurray-Lamour-Hutton.	
4322 Henry Aldrich Plays Cupid—Lydon-Vague.....	
4323 The Hitler Gang—Watson-Kosleck	
4324 Gambler's Choice—Morris-Kelly	
4325 Double Indemnity—Robinson-Stanwyck-MacMurray.	
Specials	
4335 Going My Way—Grosby-Fitzgerald.....	
4336 Lady in the Dark—Rogers-Milland.....	
4337 The Story of Dr. Wassell—Cooper-Day.....	
4338 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman.....	

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

462 Frontier Outlaw—Crabbe No. 5 (58 m.)....	Mar. 4
414 Lady in the Death House—Atwill-Parker....	Mar. 15
463 Thundering Gun Slingers— Crabbe No. 5 (60 m.).....	Mar. 25
413 The Amazing Mr. Forrest—Kruger-Horton (formerly "Gangsters' Den").....	Mar. 29
455 Guns of the Law—Texas Rangers No. 5 (55 m.)	Apr. 10
419 The Monster Maker—Naish-Morgan.....	Apr. 15
422 Shake Hands with Murder—Adrian-Jenks...	Apr. 22

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PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

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- 456 The Pinto Bandit—Texas Rangers No. 6....Apr. 27
 420 Men of the Sea—English cast.....Apr. 30
 464 Valley of Vengeance—Crabbe No. 6.....May 5
 418 The Contender—Crabbe-Judge.....May 10
 415 Waterfront—Carradine-Naish.....May 24
 404 Minstrel Man—Fields-George (reset).....June 1
 457 Spook Town—Texas Rangers No. 7.....June 3
 416 Delinquent Daughters—Tilton-Mann.....June 25

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway New York 19, N. Y.)

- 3302 The Big Show—Autry (reissue) (71 m.)....Mar. 1
 354 Beneath Western Skies—Livingston (56 m.)..Mar. 3
 311 The Fighting Seabees—Wayne-Hayward
 (reset).....Mar. 10
 377 The Mojave Firebrand—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.)..Mar. 19
 312 My Best Gal—Withers-Lydon.....Mar. 28
 378 Hidden Valley Outlaws—Elliott-Hayes
 (56 m.).....Apr. 2
 355 The Laramie Trail—Livingston (56 m.)....Apr. 3
 366 Outlaws of Sante Fe—Don Barry (56 m.)..Apr. 4
 313 Rosie, the Riveter—Frazee-Albertson.....Apr. 9
 3303 Oh, Susanna—Autry (reissue) (59 m.)....Apr. 15
 315 The Lady and the Monster—Von Stroheim..Apr. 17
 314 Trocadero—Lane-Purcell.....Apr. 24
 316 Jamboree—Ruth Terry.....May 5
 342 Cowboy and the Senorita—Roy Rogers
 (78 m.).....May 12
 3311 Tuscon Raiders—Elliott-Hayes.....May 14
 3304 Melody Trail—Autry (reissue).....June 1
 317 Silent Partner—Henry-Withers.....June 9
 343 Yellow Rose of Texas—Roy Rogers.....June 24

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 4

- 416 Tender Comrade—Rogers-Ryan.....
 417 Passport to Destiny—Lanchester-Oliver.....
 418 Curse of the Cat People—Simon-Smith.....
 419 Escape to Danger—Portman-Dvorak.....
 420 Action in Arabia—Sanders-Bruce.....

Block 5

- 421 The Falcon Out West—Conway.....
 422 Days of Glory—Peck-Toumanova.....
 423 Yellow Canary—Neagle-Greene.....
 424 Seven Days Ashore—Carney-Brown.....
 425 Show Business—Cantor-Murphy-Davis.....

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- 451 The North Star—Baxter-Huston.....
 452 Up in Arms—Danny Kaye.....
 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (reissue).....

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

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- 422 The Purple Heart—Andrews-Levene.....Mar.
 423 Four Jills in a Jeep—Francis-Ray-Landis.....Mar.

Block 9

- 424 Buffalo Bill—McCrea-O'Hara.....Apr.
 425 Tampico—Robinson-Bari.....Apr.
 426 Shrine of Victory—Documentary.....Apr.

Block 10

- 427 Pin Up Girl—Grable-Ray.....May
 428 Bermuda Mystery—Foster-Rutherford.....May

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Bridge of San Luis Rey—Bari-Calhern.....Feb. 11
 Texas Masquerade—Hopalong Cassidy (59 m.)...Feb. 18
 Knickerbocker Holiday—Eddy-Coburn.....Mar. 17
 It Happened Tomorrow—Powell-Darnell.....Apr. 7
 Voice in the Wind—Gurie-Lederer.....Apr. 21
 Lumber Jack—Hopalong Cassidy (64 m.)....Apr. 28
 Song of the Open Road—Bergen-O'Neill.....not set
 Up in Mabel's Room—Patrick-O'Keefe.....not set
 The Hairy Ape—Bendix-Hayward.....not set
 Summer Storm—Sanders-Darnell.....not set
 Since You Went Away—Colbert-Cotten.....not set
 Sensations of 1945—Fields-Powell.....not set

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 8031 Hat Check Honey—McDonald-Errol.....Mar. 10
 8084 Oklahoma Raiders—Tex Ritter (57 m.)....Mar. 17
 8065 Ladies Courageous—Young-Fitzgerald.....Mar. 17
 8044 Hi, Good Lookin'—Harriet Hilliard.....Mar. 24
 8027 Weird Woman—Chaney-Gwynne.....Apr. 14
 8016 Her Primitive Man—Allbritton-Paige.....Apr. 21
 8037 Moon Over Las Vegas—Jean-Bruce.....Apr. 28
 8036 Slightly Terrific—Errol-Rooney.....May 5
 8006 Cobra Woman—Montez-Hall.....May 12
 8032 Pardon My Rhythm—Jean-Knowles.....May 19
 8019 The Scarlet Claw—Rathbone-Bruce.....May 26
 8085 Boss of Boomtown—Rod Cameron.....May 26
 8012 This is the Life—O'Connor-Foster.....June 2
 The Invisible Man's Revenge—Hall-Ankers.....June 9
 South of Dixie—Gwynne-Bruce.....June 16
 Ghost Catchers—Olsen & Johnson.....June 30
 ("Follow the Boys," originally an April 7 release,
 has been withdrawn.)

Warner-First National Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 311 In Our Time—Henreid-Lupino.....Feb. 19
 325 Frisco Kid—Cagney (reissue) (77 m.)....Mar. 4
 312 Passage to Marseille—Bogart-Rains.....Mar. 11
 313 Shine on Harvest Moon—Sheridan-Morgan..Apr. 8
 314 Uncertain Glory—Flynn-Lucas.....Apr. 22
 316 Between Two Worlds—Garfield-Henreid....May 20
 317 Make Your Own Bed—Carson-Manning.....June 10
 224 This Is the Army—Leslie-Murphy (re-release) June 24
 The Mask of Dimitrios—Greenstreet-Lorre...July 1

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE**Columbia—One Reel**

- 5601 Amoozin' But Confoozin'—Li'l Abner
 (8 m.).....Mar. 3
 5706 Lionel Lion—Phantasies (6 m.).....Mar. 3
 Why of Wartime Taxes—OWI (Free)
 (10 m.).....Mar. 9
 5660 Community Sings No. 10 (10 min.).....Mar. 17
 5858 Screen Snapshots No. 8 (8 m.).....Mar. 24
 5807 Golden Gloves—Sports (9½ m.).....Mar. 31
 5707 Giddy-Yapping—Phantasies (6 m.).....Apr. 7
 5904 Traditions of Mexico—Panoramic
 (8 m.) (re.).....Apr. 18
 5859 Screen Snapshots No. 9 (9½ m.).....Apr. 21
 5955 Film Vodvil No. 5 (10 m.) (re.).....Apr. 21
 5753 The Dream Kids—Fox & Crow
 (7½ m.) (re.).....Apr. 28
 5602 Sadie Hawkins Day—Li'l Abner (7 m.)....May 4
 5808 Table Tennis Topnotchers—Sports (9 m.)..May 5
 5661 Community Sings No. 11 (10 m.).....May 16
 5504 The Disillusioned Bluebird—Color Rhapsody..May 26
 5860 Screen Snapshots No. 10 (9½ m.).....June 2
 5708 Tangled Travels—Phantasies.....June 9
 5809 Give and Take—Sports.....June 19
 5603 A Peekoolyar Sitcheeayshun—Li'l Abner...June 30

Columbia—Two Reels

- 5405 Crash Goes the Hash—Stooges (17 m.)....Feb. 5
 5169 The Fire Princess—The Phantom (20 m.)...Feb. 11
 5433 Bachelor Daze—Summerville (18 m.)....Feb. 17
 5170 The Emerald Key—The Phantom (20 m.)...Feb. 18
 5171 The Fangs of the Beast—Phantom (20 m.)..Mar. 3
 5434 His Tale is Told—Clyde (17½ m.).....Mar. 4
 5173 A Lost City—The Phantom (20 m.).....Mar. 10
 5174 Peace in the Jungle—Phantom (20 m.)....Mar. 17
 5406 Busy Buddies—Stooges (16½ m.).....Mar. 18
 5435 Defective Detectives—Lang-Brendel
 (16½ m.).....Apr. 3
 5411 Oh, Baby!—Hugh Herbert (18½ m.).....Apr. 17
 5140 The Twin Brothers—Desert Hawk (18 m.)..Apr. 26
 5422 Crazy Like a Fox—Gilbert (18½ m.).....May 1
 5141 The Evil Eye—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....May 3
 5142 The Mark of the Scimitar—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.).....May 10
 5143 A Caliph's Treachery—Desert Hawk (18 m.) May 17
 5144 The Secret of the Palace—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.).....May 24
 5407 The Yoke's On Me—Stooges (16 m.).....May 26
 5145 The Feast of the Beggars—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.).....May 31

5436 You Were Never Uglier—Clyde (18 m.)...June 2
 5146 Double Jeopardy—Desert Hawk (18 m.)...June 7
 5147 The Slave Traders—Desert Hawk (18 m.)...June 14
 5148 The Underground River—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.)June 21
 5149 The Faithful Wheel—Desert Hawk (18 m.)...June 28
 5150 The Mystery of the Mosque—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.)July 5
 5151 The Hand of Vengeance—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.)July 12
 5152 Sword of Fate—Desert Hawk (18 m.)...July 19
 5153 The Wizard's Story—Desert Hawk (18 m.)...July 26
 5154 The Triumph of Kasim—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.)Aug. 2

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel

1942-43

W-456 Innertube Antics—Cartoon (7 m.).....Jan. 22
 C-499 Radio Bugs—Our Gang (11 m.).....Apr. 1
 C-500 Dancing Romeo—Our Gang (10 m.).....Apr. 29
 (End of Season)

1943-44

T-511 Through the Colorado Rockies—Traveltalk
 (10 m.)Oct. 23
 T-512 Grand Canyon, Pride of Creation—
 Traveltalk (9 m.)Nov. 27
 M-581 My Tomato—Miniature (7 m.).....Dec. 4
 M-583 No News is Good News—Miniature (9m.)...Dec. 18
 M-582 Kid in Upper Four—Miniature (11 m.)...Dec. 25
 T-513 Salt Lake Diversions—Traveltalk (9 m.)...Dec. 25
 S-551 Practical Joker—Pete Smith (11 m.).....Jan. 8
 T-514 A Day in Death Valley—Traveltalk (10 m.)...Jan. 22
 T-515 Visiting in St. Louis—Traveltalk (9 m.)...Feb. 19
 S-552 Home Maid—Pete Smith (9 m.).....Feb. 19
 W-531 Zoot Cat—Cartoon (7 m.)Feb. 26
 T-516 Mackinac Island—Traveltalk (9 m.).....Mar. 18
 W-532 Screwball Squirrel—Cartoon (7 m.)Apr. 1
 S-553 Groovie Movie—Pete Smith (9 m.).....Apr. 8
 T-517 Along the Cactus Trail—Traveltalk (10m.) Apr. 15
 M-584 Tale of a Dog—Miniature (11 m.).....Apr. 15
 M-585 A Great Day's Coming—Miniature (11m.) Apr. 22
 S-554 Sportsman's Memories—Pete Smith (10 m.) Apr. 22
 W-533 Batty Baseball—Cartoon (6 m.).....Apr. 22
 M-586 Important Business—Miniature (11 m.)...Apr. 29
 W-534 Million Dollar Cat—Cartoon (7 m.).....June 6
 T-518 Colorful Colorado—TraveltalkJune 26

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels

1942-43

A-404 Main Street Today—Special (20 m.)...Mar. 25
 A-405 Patrolling the Ether—Special (20 m.)...Apr. 22

1943-44

X-510 Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.)...Jan. 1

Paramount—One Reel

L3-3 Unusual Occupations No. 3 (10 m.).....Mar. 3
 U3-4 Say Ah, Jasper—Mad. Mod. (8 m.).....Mar. 10
 Y3-3 In the Newsreels—Speak. of Animals (9 m.) Mar. 17
 R3-6 Heroes on the Mend—Sportlight (9 m.)...Mar. 24
 P3-3 Cilly Goose—Noveltoons (9 m.).....Apr. 24
 D3-3 Lulu Gets the Birdie—Little Lulu (8 m.)...May 19
 J3-4 Popular Science No. 4 (10 m.).....Apr. 17
 E3-3 We're on Our Way to Rio—Popeye.....Apr. 21
 P3-4 Suddenly It's Spring—Noveltoons.....Apr. 28
 R3-7 Trail Breakers—Sportlight (9 m.).....Apr. 28
 U3-5 And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry St.—
 Mad. Mod.May 5
 L3-4 Usual Occupations No. 4 (10 m.).....May 12
 D3-4 In Hollywood—Little Lulu.....May 19
 Y3-4 In Your Pet Problem—Speak. of Animals...May 19
 E3-4 Moving Aweigh—PopeyeMay 26
 R3-8 Winged Couriers—SportlightJune 9
 D3-5 Lucky Lulu—Little Lulu.....June 30

Paramount—Two Reels

FF3-1 Mardi Gras—Musical Parade (20 m.).....Oct. 1
 FF3-2 Caribbean Romance—Musical Parade(20m.)...Dec. 17
 FF3-3 Lucky Cowboy—Musical Parade (20 m.)...Feb. 11
 FF3-4 Showboat Serenade—Musical Parade(20m.)...Apr. 14
 FF3-5 Fun Time—Musical Parade (20 m.).....June 16

RKO—One Reel

1942-43

34114 Trombone Trouble—Disney (7 m.).....Feb. 18
 34115 How to Play Golf—Disney (8 m.).....Mar. 10
 34116 Donald Duck & the Gorilla—Disney (7 m.) Mar. 31
 34117 Contrary Candor—Disney (7 m.).....Apr. 21
 34118 Commando Duck—Disney (7 m.)May 12
 (End of 1942-43 Season)

1943-44

44201 Flicker Flashbacks No. 1 (9 m.).....Sept. 5
 44301 Field Trial Champions—Sportscope (9m.)...Sept. 10
 44202 Flicker Flashbacks No. 2 (9 m.).....Oct. 1
 44302 Joe Kirkwood—Sportscope (9 m.).....Oct. 8
 44203 Flicker Flashbacks No. 3 (9 m.).....Oct. 29
 44303 Stars and Strikes—Sportscope (9 m.).....Nov. 5
 44204 Flicker Flashbacks No. 4 (9 m.).....Nov. 26
 44304 Mountain Anglers—Sportscope (9 m.)...Dec. 3
 44205 Flicker Flashbacks No. 5 (9 m.).....Dec. 24
 44305 Co-ed Sports—Sportscope (8 m.).....Dec. 31
 44206 Flicker Flashbacks No. 6 (9 m.).....Jan. 21
 44306 Basket Wizards Sportscope (8 m.).....Jan. 28
 44207 Flicker Flashbacks No. 7 (10 m.).....Feb. 18
 44307 Mallard Flight—Sportscope (9 m.).....Feb. 25
 44308 On Paint—Sportscope (8 m.).....Mar. 24

RKO—Two Reels

43104 Mail Call—This is America (17 m.).....Feb. 11
 43704 Say Uncle—Leon Errol (18 m.).....Feb. 18
 43404 Love Your Landlord—Edgar Kennedy
 (18 m.)Mar. 3
 43105 News Front—This is America (16 m.)....Mar. 10
 43106 Aircraft Carrier—This Is America
 (18½ m.)Apr. 7
 43705 Pappa Knows Worst—Leon Errol (17 m.)...Apr. 14
 43405 Radio Rampage—Edgar Kennedy (16 m.)...Apr. 28

Republic—Two Reels

381 The Masked Marvel—Steele-Currie
 (12 episodes)Nov. 6
 382 Captain America—Purcell-Atwill
 (15 episodes)Feb. 5
 383 The Tiger Woman—Stirling-Lane
 (12 episodes)May 27

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

4512 A Day in June—Terrytoon (7 m.).....Mar. 3
 4153 Steamboat on the River—Magic Carpet
 (9 m.)Mar. 10
 4513 The Champion of Justice—Terrytoon (7 m.)...Mar. 17
 4201 Sails Aloft—Adventure (9 m.).....Mar. 31
 4514 The Frog & the Princess—Terry. (7 m.)....Apr. 7
 4303 Fun for All—Sports (9 m.).....Apr. 14
 4515 Mighty Mouse Meets Jekyll & Hyde Cat—
 Terrytoon (6 m.)Apr. 28
 4203 Mailman of Snake River—Adventure (9 m.) May 5
 4516 My Boy, Johnny—Terrytoon (6½ m.).....May 12
 4351 Nymph of the Southland—Sports.....May 26
 4517 Wolf! Wolf!—Terrytoon.....June 2
 4902 Low Lehr Makes the News.....June 9
 4518 Eliza on the Ice—Terrytoon.....June 16
 4304 Gridiron Highlights—SportsJune 30
 4519 The Green Line—Terrytoon.....July 7
 4352 Blue Grass Gentleman—Sports.....July 14
 4520 Carmen's Veranda..TerrytoonJuly 28

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

Vol. 10 No. 6 Sweden's Middle Road—March of Time
 (18 m.)Jan. 28
 Vol. 10 No. 7 Post War Jobs?—March of Time
 (18 m.)Feb. 25
 Vol. 10 No. 8 South American Front—March of Time
 (18 m.)Mar. 24
 Vol. 10 No. 9 The Irish Question—March of Time
 (18 m.)Apr. 21

Universal—One Reel

- 8357 Animal Tricks—Var. Views (9 m.).....Feb. 21
 8376 The Barefoot Judge—Per. Odd. (9 m.).....Feb. 28
 8377 Aviation Expert—Per. Odd. (9 m.).....Mar. 20
 8232 The Greatest Man in Siam—Swing Symphony
 (7 m.).....Mar. 27
 8358 Hobo News—Var. Views (9 m.).....Mar. 27
 8238 Barber of Seville—Cartune (7 m.).....Apr. 10
 8378 Foster's Canary College—Per. Odd. (9 m.)...Apr. 24
 8359 Fraud by Mail—Var. Views (9 m.).....Apr. 24
 8233 Jungle Jive—Swing Symphony (7 m.).....May 15
 8379 Varga & His Beauties—Per. Odd. (9 m.)....May 22
 8360 Mr. Chimp Goes South—Var. Views (9 m.)..May 29

Universal—Two Reels

- 8127 Fellow on a Furlough—Musical (15 m.)....Mar. 29
 8881 Shipwrecked Among the Icebergs—Great
 Alaskan Mystery No. 1 (20 m.).....Apr. 25
 8128 Stars and Violins—Musical (15 m.).....Apr. 26
 8882 Thundering Doom—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 2 (20 m.).....May 2
 8883 Battle in the Clouds—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 3 (20 m.).....May 9
 8884 Masked Murder—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 4 (20 m.).....May 16
 8129 Melody Garden—Musical (15 m.).....May 17
 8885 The Bridge of Disaster—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 5 (20 m.).....May 23
 8886 Shadowing Doom—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 6 (20 m.).....May 30
 8887 Crashing Timbers—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 7 (20 m.).....June 6
 8888 In a Flaming Plane—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 8 (20 m.).....June 13
 8889 Hurling Through Space—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 9 (20 m.).....June 20
 8890 Tricked by a Booby Trap—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 10 (20 m.).....June 27
 8891 The Tunnel of Terror—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 11 (20 m.).....July 4
 8892 Electrocuted—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 12 (20 min.).....July 11
 8893 The Boomerang—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 13 (20 m.).....July 18

Vitaphone—One Reel

- 9404 Struggle for Life—Varieties (10 m.).....Mar. 4
 9703 I've Got Plenty of Mutton—Mer. Mel. (7m.)Mar. 11
 9307 The Bear's Tale—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7m.)Mar. 11
 9607 South American Sway—Mer. Mas. (10 m.)...Mar. 18
 9506 Chinatown Champs—Sports (10 m.).....Mar. 18
 9704 The Weekly Reporter—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)...Mar. 25
 9705 Tick Tock Tuckered—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)....Apr. 8
 9308 Sweet Sioux—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)...Apr. 8
 9405 Jungle Thrills—Varieties (10 m.).....Apr. 15
 9608 Rudy Vallee's Coast Guard Band—Mer. Mas.
 (10 m.).....Apr. 15
 9722 Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips—Mer. Mel.
 (7 m.).....Apr. 22
 9507 Backyard Golf—Sports (10 m.).....Apr. 22
 9706 The Swooner Crooner—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)...May 6
 9309 Of Fox & Hounds—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
 (7 m.).....May 13
 9509 Mexican Sportland—Sports (10 m.).....May 13
 9707 Russian Rhapsody—Mer. Mas. (7 m.).....May 20
 9708 Duck Soup to Nuts—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)....May 27
 9310 Thugs with Dirty Mugs—Mer. Mel.
 (reissue).....June 3
 9723 Hare Ribbon—Bugs Bunny (7 m.).....June 3
 9606 Songs of the Range—Mer. Mas. (10 m.)...June 17
 9709 Angel Puss—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....June 17
 9311 A Wild Hare—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)...June 24
 9508 Filipino Sports Parade—Sports (10 m.) (re.) June 24
 9710 Slightly Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....July 1
 9510 Cattleman's Days—Sports (10 m.).....July 1
 9711 Brother Brat—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....July 15
 9312 The Cat Came Back—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
 (7 m.).....July 15
 9511 Colorado Trout—Sports (10 m.).....July 22
 9609 All-Star Melody Masters—Mer. Mas. (10 m.) July 22
 9406 Throwing the Bull—Varieties (10 m.).....July 29
 9724 Hare Force—Bugs Bunny (7 m.).....July 29

Vitaphone—Two Reels

- 9103 Grandfather's Follies—Featurette (20 m.)...Feb. 5
 9110 Roaring Guns—Sante Fe Western (20 m.)...Feb. 19
 9105 Nights in Mexico City—Featurette (20 m.)...Mar. 25
 9111 Wells Fargo Days—Sante Fe Western (20m.)Apr. 1
 9104 Our Frontier in Italy—Featurette (20 m.)...Apr. 29
 9005 Winners Circle—Special (20 m.).....May 6
 9004 Devil Boats—Special (20 min.).....May 27
 9112 Trial by Trigger—Sante Fe Western (20 m.) June 10
 9106 Halls of Montezuma—Featurette (20 m.)...July 8

**NEWSWEEKLY
 NEW YORK
 RELEASE DATES**

Pathe News

- 45175 Sat. (O)...May 13
 45276 Wed. (E)...May 17
 45177 Sat. (O)...May 20
 45278 Wed. (E)...May 24
 45179 Sat. (O)...May 27
 45280 Wed. (E)...May 31
 45181 Sat. (O)...June 3
 45282 Wed. (E)...June 7
 45183 Sat. (O)...June 10
 45284 Wed. (E)...June 14
 45185 Sat. (O)...June 17
 45286 Wed. (E)...June 21
 45187 Sat. (O)...June 24
 45288 Wed. (E)...June 28
 45189 Sat. (O)...July 1

Fox Movietone

- 73 Tues. (O)...May 16
 74 Thurs. (E)...May 18
 75 Tues. (O)...May 23
 76 Thurs. (E)...May 25
 77 Tues. (O)...May 30
 78 Thurs. (E)...June 1
 79 Tues. (O)...June 6
 80 Thurs. (E)...June 8
 81 Tues. (O)...June 13
 82 Thurs. (E)...June 15
 83 Tues. (O)...June 20
 84 Thurs. (E)...June 22
 85 Tues. (O)...June 27
 86 Thurs. (E)...June 29
 87 Tues. (O)...July 4

Universal

- 292 Fri. (E)...May 12
 293 Wed. (O)...May 17
 294 Fri. (E)...May 19
 295 Wed. (O)...May 24
 296 Fri. (E)...May 26
 297 Wed. (O)...May 31
 298 Fri. (E)...June 2
 299 Wed. (O)...June 7
 300 Fri. (E)...June 9
 301 Wed. (O)...June 14
 302 Fri. (E)...June 16
 303 Wed. (O)...June 21
 304 Fri. (E)...June 23
 305 Wed. (O)...June 28
 306 Fri. (O)...June 30

Paramount News

- 73 Sunday (O)...May 14
 74 Thurs. (E)...May 18
 75 Sunday (O)...May 21
 76 Thurs. (E)...May 25
 77 Sunday (O)...May 28
 78 Thurs. (E)...June 1
 79 Sunday (O)...June 4
 80 Thurs. (E)...June 8
 81 Sunday (O)...June 11
 82 Thurs. (E)...June 15
 83 Sunday (O)...June 18
 84 Thurs. (E)...June 22
 85 Sunday (O)...June 25
 86 Thurs. (E)...June 29
 87 Sunday (O)...July 2

Metrotone News

- 271 Tues. (O)...May 16
 272 Thurs. (E)...May 18
 273 Tues. (O)...May 23
 274 Thurs. (E)...May 25
 275 Tues. (O)...May 30
 276 Thurs. (E)...June 1
 277 Tues. (O)...June 6
 278 Thurs. (E)...June 8
 279 Tues. (O)...June 13
 280 Thurs. (E)...June 15
 281 Tues. (O)...June 20
 282 Thurs. (E)...June 22
 283 Tues. (O)...June 27
 284 Thurs. (E)...June 29
 285 Tues. (O)...July 4

All American News

- 81 FridayMay 12
 82 FridayMay 19
 83 FridayMay 26
 84 FridayJune 2
 85 FridayJune 9
 86 FridayJune 16
 87 FridayJune 23
 88 FridayJune 30

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Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1944

No. 21

A CLASSIC!

You remember, I am sure, that Mr. Joseph Bernhard, head of the Warner Bros. theatre department, resigned from the board of directors of Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America, because Ed Kuykendall and other members of the board went to the Department of Justice and recommended that the Department proceed with the suit against the major companies.

In an effort to appease Mr. Bernhard and probably other affiliated members of the board, and thus save his meal ticket, Ed Kuykendall issued a bulletin, dated April 12, among which is contained the following classic, under the head heading, "MPTOA Independent Members' Views Only Presented to the D. of J.":

"Nevertheless it should be noted that these proposals are (were) presented by and on behalf of the unaffiliated or independent members of MPTOA, who are in the vast majority in the MPTOA group of state and regional exhibitor associations. Neither the affiliated nor the partly affiliated exhibitors represented in the MPTOA organizations were consulted in the matter nor participated in the conference that drafted the statement for Mr. Clark. Inasmuch as they are defendants in the suit, they are represented exclusively by their own counsel in connection with the Consent Decree, and in no wise by MPTOA."

Before commenting on this classic, I want to state that Ed's statement to the effect that the independent exhibitors in the MPTOA group are in the "vast majority," that is, in numbers that can always override any decisions that the affiliated group may take as to the policies of MPTOA, is a pipe dream of his. But he has been able to make this pipe dream be accepted as a reality by many persons outside the industry, particularly by some members of Congress, because Ed is able to travel far and wide on the money put up by affiliated theatres, and is assisted by capable publicity men.

What really happened in Washington is this, as I have learned from authoritative sources: Ed called a meeting of the unaffiliated members of the MPTOA board of directors with a view to influencing them to compose a petition to the Department of Justice requesting the dropping of the suit against the major companies and to grant to the exhibitors some reforms that might appease them. But his board revolted on him, because they have been hurt by the high prices they have had to pay for film, and drafted an entirely different resolution. Kuykendall then found himself in a position from which he could not retreat.

Ed's statement to the effect that the petition to the Department of Justice represented only the indepen-

dent exhibitors in MPTOA, who are "in the vast majority," is purely "bunk." What dues Ed collects from truly independent exhibitors each year is not enough to pay for the postage consumed by the organization.

NEW THEATRES IN AREAS THAT REQUIRE THEM

Early this month Mr. H. V. Harvey, president of Independent Theatres Owners of Northern California, with headquarters in San Francisco, wrote a letter to Mr. R. W. Longstreth, Regional Director of the War Production Board of the Office of Civilian Requirement, expressing concern over his office's recent announcement to the effect that additional theatre facilities are required in the San Francisco area, and that applications for priority orders for theatre construction would be considered by that office with favor. Mr. Harvey expressed the fear lest speculators, inexperienced in the operation of motion picture theatres, may undertake to obtain permits to build theatres in localities where the existing facilities are adequate, with the result that the new theatres would, not only fail to serve the Department's purpose, but also cause great economic waste both during and after the war.

If the Office of Civilian Requirements, says Mr. Harvey, had the necessary manpower to investigate each application before issuing a priority order, it would be a different matter, but since such facilities do not exist at present, Mr. Harvey has offered the services of his organization in furnishing, upon request, whatever information it possesses.

At the request of the board of directors of his organization, Mr. Harvey called the attention of Mr. Longstreth to the reports in the trade papers to the effect that theatre circuits, either controlled by or affiliated with producing interests and presumably barred by the terms of the Consent Decree, have asked for blanket authorization to construct new theatres in the San Francisco Bay area, thus hoping, through the Offices of Civilian Requirements, to circumvent the anti-expansion policy of the Department of Justice.

"If in the opinion of the Office of Civilian Requirements," writes Mr. Harvey, "any new theatres are necessary in this area, independent theatre owners already operating in this locality and not in violation of the anti-trust laws, are themselves ready and willing, and financially able, to provide additional theatre facilities at any point or points requiring them."

"It may be that the Regional office has already determined upon the localities where it believes new

(Continued on last page)

"The Eve of St. Mark" with Anne Baxter, William Eythe and Michael O'Shea
(20th Century-Fox, June; time, 96 min.)

Based on Maxwell Anderson's successful Broadway stage play of the same title, this is a carefully produced war drama, one of the better pictures of its type. But because the public has shown resistance to war pictures, and because this one lacks what might set it apart from numerous other good war pictures, it will require selling to put it over. Perhaps the fame of the stage play will be of considerable help. Though the film is based on an original play, it offers little that has not been said or done many times. Moreover, there is more talk than action. A good summation of what the film amounts to is the remark of one reviewer, who said: "It is one-half 'See Here Private Hargrove' and the other half 'Bataan.'"

The story, which begins in 1941, revolves around a group of inductees and concerns their reactions to army life and the cause for which they fight. Among those included in the group are William Eythe, an idealistic young man, son of a farmer, who was deeply in love with Anne Baxter, a neighbor's daughter; Vincent Price, a cynical, poetical Southern aristocrat; and Michael O'Shea, a tempestuous but lovable Irishman. Following their adventures in camp, and the tender moments that Eythe spends with his parents and Anne, while on leave, the men are shipped overseas. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, the action shifts to a Philippines island, where the three men are part of a small group fighting a delaying action against the Japs. They suffer untold hardships as the relentless bombing attacks by the Japanese slowly decreases their ranks. Fever-ridden and short of supplies, all are overjoyed when orders arrive giving them permission to evacuate the island, but pointing out the importance of every hour they hold out. When Eythe remarks that they ought to remain, he is shouted down by the others who bitterly give their reasons for favoring immediate evacuation. When a vote is taken, however, they unanimously agree to fight on. Unlike the stage play's ending, in which the men sacrifice their lives, the film indicates that they make their escape after fighting a successful delaying action.

The performances are excellent throughout, with that of Vincent Price's outstanding.

George Seaton wrote the screen play, William Perlberg produced it, and John M. Stahl directed it. The cast includes Ruth Nelson, Ray Collins, Stanley Prager, Dickie Moore, Murray Alper and many others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Summer Storm" with George Sanders, Linda Darnell and Edward Everett Horton
(United Artists, no release date set; time, 107 min.)

This is a finely produced, interest-holding, drama. It should appeal chiefly to sophisticates, for the story is boldly sexy. Its subject matter is somewhat unpleasant, but in view of the fact that "Of Human Bondage" and "The Moon and Sixpence," which were based on similar themes, proved successful at the box-office, this picture, too, should go over well. As far as small towns are concerned, its success will depend on the exploitation it receives in the key-city runs. The leading characters are unsympathetic, particularly the hero and heroine. Linda Darnell, who is cast in a "Theda Bara" role, is presented as a fickle, vicious, and immoral woman, using her physical charm to en-

tice men and degrade them in an effort to better her position in life. George Sanders is shown as a weakling, because of his inability to resist her wiles, though fully aware of her worthlessness. Their actions tend to hurt an innocent person, Miss Darnell's husband, for whom one feels sympathy. The action takes place in a small Russian village, in 1911, furnishing an interesting background:—

Although in love with Anna Lee, daughter of a newspaper publisher, George Sanders, a judge, finds himself fascinated by Linda Darnell, daughter of Sig Ruman, a drunken woodcutter working on the estate of Edward Everett Horton, a prosperous and profligate Russian Count. Linda, to better her station in life, agrees to marry Hugo Haas, Horton's middle-aged overseer. As a whim, Horton arranges for the wedding to be held in his home. Sanders attends the party with Anna. After the ceremony, Sanders finds himself alone with Linda and realizes that he is madly in love with her. Anna discovers them in an embrace and leaves the party abruptly. Though depressed by the break between Anna and himself, Sanders continues the love affair with Linda, only to learn that she was beginning to accept the attentions of Horton as well. When Linda leaves her husband to accept Horton's proposal of marriage, Sanders, realizing that she had ruined his life and Anna's, stabs her to death. Guilt for the murder is fastened on Haas, who is sentenced to life-long labor in Siberia. Sanders allows the realization of his guilt to eat into his soul, and unburdens himself by writing of the crime. Years later, Sanders, reduced to poverty, lives with Horton, whose estate had been confiscated by the Soviets. Horton, believing that Sanders had been writing a novel, takes the manuscript to Anna, now a publisher, and offers it to her for publication. Learning of this, Sanders rushes to Anna. She returns the manuscript to him in an envelope addressed to the police. Remorseful, Sanders drops it into a mail box, but a moment later tries to retrieve it from the mailman. In the fight that ensues, the police shoot him dead.

Rowland Leigh and Douglas Sirk wrote the screen play, Seymour Nebenzal produced it, and Mr. Sirk directed it. Rudolph Joseph was the associated producer. The cast includes John Philliber, Andre Charlot, John Abbott and others.

Adult entertainment.

"Cobra Woman" with Maria Montez, Jon Hall and Sabu

(Universal, May 12; time, 70 min.)

Mediocre. Latest in Universal's series of Technicolor fantasies, featuring Maria Montez and John Hall, it falls far below the entertainment level of the previous pictures. Its main appeal may be directed to children, who should find some of the proceedings highly exciting, and to those patrons whose demands are easily satisfied by stupendous sets, Technicolor photography, and sarong-clad girls. Reasonably intelligent adults, however, will find it all a bit too ludicrous. This time the action takes place on a mythical South Sea island inhabited by a tribe of snake worshipers, and the fable revolves around the efforts of an island beauty to end the ruthless reign of her wicked twin sister, a High Priestess. Maria Montez, who plays a dual role, makes the most of every opportunity to display her physical charms, which seem to be the main purpose of the film, and Jon Hall is again the dashing hero who rescues the damsel in distress:—

On the day of her marriage to Ramu (Jon Hall), Tollea (Maria Montez) is kidnapped and taken to Cobra Island, where she learns from a kindly old Queen (Mary Nash) that she was the elder twin sister of Nadja (also Maria Montez), the island's wicked High Priestess, who exacted heavy tribute from the natives under penalty of death. The Queen wanted Tollea to assume her rightful place as High Priestess and to bring an end to Nadja's cruel reign. Meanwhile Ramu, accompanied by Kado (Sabu), his native boy, comes to Cobra Island to rescue Tollea. He is captured and imprisoned by Martok (Edgar Barrier), Nadja's minister of affairs, but, with Kado's aid, manages to escape and to contact Tollea. The old Queen begs Ramu to help bring about the abdication of Nadja. Aware that her rule was endangered, Nadja orders Martok to murder the Queen. Tollea, aroused, engages Nadja in a fight to the death and come out the victor. She dresses herself in Nadja's robes and, assuming her place as High Priestess, calls a halt to the persecution of the natives. Martok, in defiance, challenges her rule, but he and his men are subdued by Ramu and Kato, who come to Tollea's aid.

Gene Lewis and Richard Brooks wrote the screen play, George Waggner produced it, and Robert Siodmak directed it. The cast includes Lon Chaney, Lois Collier, Moroni Olsen and others.

"Make Your Own Bed" with Jack Carson, Jane Wyman, Alan Hale and Irene Manning
(Warner Bros., June 10; time, 83 min.)

Poor. Using as its basic theme the domestic help shortage, this is a boresome comedy, tedious and long drawn out. The story is made up of a series of time-worn comedy situations, and it falls into a rut at the very beginning from which it never succeeds in extricating itself. The comedy is forced, and most of it fails to provoke even as much as a grin. The characters are made to behave in so ridiculous a manner that the spectator becomes impatient with them all. There is no human interest. Jack Carson and Jane Wyman showed promise as a comedy team in their last picture, "Princess O'Rourke," but they will need better story material than this to continue their success:—

Alan Hale, a wealthy manufacturer, finds it difficult to obtain household servants because of the manpower shortage. To solve his problem, Hale tricks Jack Carson, a private detective, into posing as his butler while investigating a supposed romance between his wife (Irene Manning) and his next door neighbor (George Tobias). To make sure that Carson remains on the job, Hale also tells him that Nazi spies planned to blow up his factory. Carson, who had just been discharged by Robert Shayne, head of a detective agency and his rival for the love of Jane Wyman, gladly accepts the position. Jane, eager to see Carson get ahead agrees to help him by posing as the maid. Having started a hoax, Hale continues it by employing a group of actors to spend the week-end at his home and to pose as Nazi spies. Shayne, however, learns of the hoax and informs Jane about it. Meanwhile Carson learns of the deception when he overhears Hale and the actors plotting to stage a fake hold-up in the library. In a desperate attempt to win back Jane's love and confidence, Carson tells her that the actors are really spies and invites her into the library to prove it. Much to his surprise, his assertion proves correct. The spies, who had been posing as actors,

overpower Carson and tie him up. But with the aid of one of the spies, who turns out to be an FBI agent, Carson frees himself and helps capture the gang. He ends up a hero, with Jane in his arms.

Frances Swann and Edmund Joseph wrote the screen play, Alex Gottlieb produced it, and Peter Godfrey directed it. The cast includes Tala Birell, Ricardo Cortez, Kurt Katch and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Hairy Ape" with William Bendix, Susan Hayward and John Loder

(United Artists, no release date set; time, 91 min.)

By reason of William Bendix's fine acting, this picture, which has been produced artistically, turns out to be an interesting drama. The story is based on Eugene O'Neill's play, which was produced on the Broadway stage in 1922, with the late Louis Wolheim in the lead. The picture is really more of a character study than a connected story. It revolves around a brutal, boastful coal stoker on board a ship, proud of his massive strength, whose sensitivities are touched deeply when a beautiful rich girl insultingly calls him a "hairy ape." The most gripping situation is near the finish, where Bendix, under a nervous tension and about to kill the girl, becomes satisfied in his own mind that he was not beneath the level of his insulter, despite their difference in social positions, and once again becomes master of his domain—the stokehold. It is doubtful whether the rank and file will catch the spirit of O'Neill's play, but they should be entertained by the sheer force of Bendix's performance:—

In Lisbon, on the eve of their sailing for New York, William Bendix, chief stoker of an old coal burning ship, and his two pals, Roman Bohnen and Tom Fadden, start a riot in a cafe and are saved from the police by the timely intervention of John Loder, the ship's second engineer. During the voyage, Susan Hayward, a wealthy and spoiled socialite, who delighted in enticing Loder away from Dorothy Comingore, her friend, persuades Loder to take her to the stokehold to see how the men live. She enters just as Bendix was cursing furiously at the engineers for demanding more steam. As he turns on her, flushed with anger and dripping with perspiration, she calls him a "hairy ape" and flees. Smarting under the insult, Bendix realizes that he had come up against something he could not crush with his strength. He determines to find out why she had called him an "ape." Arriving in New York, he tries to break into her apartment, only to be arrested for disturbing the peace. Released from jail, Bendix wanders into a side-show and stands by the cage of a giant gorilla. Realizing that the gorilla's only thought was to kill, he returns to Susan's apartment determined to murder her. She faints as he approaches her. When Susan comes to and sees him bending over her, she tries to lure him into making love to her. Concluding that, despite the difference in their social positions, she was no better or different than any waterfront wench he had mastered in the past, Bendix releases her and returns to his ship, his obsession gone.

Robert D. Andrews and Decla Dunning wrote the screen play, Jules Levey produced it, and Alfred Santell directed it. Joseph H. Nadel was the associate producer.

Adult entertainment.

houses should be built, and if that is the case we need only advice from you as to the locations and number of seats required; otherwise the various independent theatre owners in the congested areas are prepared now to file applications for the necessary permits . . ."

The position that Mr. Harvey and his organization have taken is sound and HARRISON'S REPORTS hopes that the organizations of other territories, where the building of new theatres is required, will take similar action.

In the way of suggestion, where an organization finds that a member had submitted a request for priority of material and is opposed by a strong independent or affiliated circuit, it might not be a bad idea for the organization and the circuit to get together so that the theatre will be operated jointly, with a certain share of the profits going to the organization. In this manner, the organizations may have a regular income, thus augmenting its income from dues.

This is merely a suggestion. If there are reasons against it, this paper will be glad to print them, provided the letters are short and to the point, on account of its limited space.

THE LOCUST ARE COMING!

Under the heading, "The Locust Are Coming!" the Service Bulletin of the Independent Theatre Owners of Northern California, contains the following item:

"When the locust come swarming down a field they eat everything in sight, leaving the country barren of every growing thing—there is nothing left for the farmer.

"We, as Exhibitors, are now threatened with a swarm of locust—not the grasshopper type but HUMAN LOCUST in the form of CARNIVALS. Not first class, responsible carnivals but the lowest class in the business. When the military restrictions on carnivals was lifted, they started swarming into California. They are leaving the East Coast and South for the miracle West. It is not that they are genuine carnivals and have the right to make a living BUT, from the information we have, their 'rides' are unsafe and 'rides' and 'shows' are just a bluff for their real purpose—GAMBLING. They are small outfits and go into the smallest of towns. They will take out all excess cash, which will hurt you but even worse, they help to further JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

"Right now we do not know what can be done about it but WE WILL DO SOMETHING. YOU CAN HELP by reporting to us if one of these outfits hit your town. Advise us what kind of an outfit it is and their conduct in your town."

HARRISON'S REPORTS wishes that the Bulletin had adhered to the moral effect of the disreputable carnivals upon the small communities and left the business end of it alone, to be treated separately, perhaps in another Bulletin, for much can be done by exhibitors if they should attack the evil from the moral point of view, for there is no question that their influence on juvenile delinquency is great.

What the Bulletin suggests to the exhibitors is the most effective method of combating the unworthy carnivals. If each exhibitor should report to the organization the conduct of these carnivals in one town and the other exhibitors send in their reports about the expected arrival of these carnivals, much can be done

by the local people to compel such carnivals, either to mend their methods and abandon their gambling devices, or be barred from the town.

Better yet, a law should be passed in each state requiring that the carnivals maintain certain standards, not only of morality but of safety, with a bond given to insure the payment of indemnity in case of accident. Such a law would bring about the extinction of the disreputable carnivals without hurting the reputable ones.

The exhibitors will have much support from the public in case they should base their appeal on the grounds that this paper has suggested, and in the event that a state law is passed setting certain standards for carnivals it is certain that the small-town exhibitors would at the same time benefit.

OHIO ALLIED SEEKS INVESTIGATION OF U. S. ATTORNEY GENERAL

At the May 9 convention of Independent Theatre Owners of Ohio, a resolution was passed petitioning Congress to investigate the conduct of the U. S. Attorney General on the ground that the proceedings under the suits that were filed by the Attorney General under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to dissolve "the motion picture trust" were suddenly halted in the summer of 1940 as a result of secret conferences behind closed doors, and was followed shortly afterwards by a consent decree, entered into by the accused companies and by the Attorney General.

The resolution states that, as a result of the Consent Decree, the monopolistic power of the defendants has increased to such an extent that these defendants now indulge in "unfair and unethical practices" to a greater extent than ever; and that their profits have piled up to double and triple the size of what they made in previous years, enabling the executives of these companies to draw "fantastic" salaries while at the same time the independent exhibitors have been threatened with extinction as a result of the high rentals they are compelled to pay.

The purpose of the investigation, the resolution states, is to ascertain definitely and quickly whether the Attorney General has exercised due diligence in enforcing the law, and what specific legislation is needed to dissolve the motion picture monopoly, restoring in the industry competitive conditions to the end that the independent exhibitor may be liberated from the present economic slavery.

A copy of the resolution has been mailed to the Vice-President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of both the Senate Committee and the House Committee on the Judiciary, and to every member of both houses of Congress.

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THE ATTITUDE OF THE NEWSPAPER REVIEWERS TOWARDS THE MOVIES

Some one has sent me from Baltimore, Maryland, a clipping of the review of "Up in Mabel's Room," by Donald Kirkley, writer for the *Baltimore Sun*; it appeared in the May 6 issue.

Since this person did not indicate whether he approved or disapproved the review, I felt that I should say something for the benefit, not only of this person, but also of such other persons as might pay close attention to all the reviewers of the daily newspapers. Here is the review:

"The new production given the ancient bedroom farce, 'Up in Mabel's Room,' is superior in most ways to the original stage show and the first screen adaptation made in 1926. Its tired old face has been lifted with topical gags, and the photography, certainly, has improved. There is only one trouble with the film now at the Century: it is about 20 years too late.

"'Up in Mabel's Room' was tossed up on a wave of infantile plays which engulfed Broadway in the early 20's, as an ugly but relatively harmless by-product of the post-war reaction. The formula was simple and, for those days, shocking. In this case it consisted of a bridegroom's attempt to retrieve an autographed undergarment he had given a girl friend before his marriage. Several couples are brought together at a house party and spend a lot of time running in and out of each other's quarters, hiding under beds and in chests, jumping in and out of windows and so forth.

"At the present time the motion-picture folks are making a lot of fuss about the 50th anniversary of their art, ladling out a great deal of self-praise about the progress which has been made in this half century. If 'Up in Mabel's Room' represents progress, we will eat the negative for lunch, without mayonnaise . . ."

The attitude of most newspaper critics is one of condescension. Having been nurtured in the traditions of the stage, they can see nothing good in motion pictures; and whenever they say something nice about a picture now and then, they say it with condescension. One of the New York critics said that the picture is "corny," but that the audience laughed heartily—a reaction he could not fathom.

If the public should enjoy the comedy in "Up in Mabel's Room" or in any other picture, what difference does it make whether it is "corny" or not? After all, pictures are produced, not for critics, but for the public.

The drama critics in New York, whenever they are unanimous against a stage play, kill it, but, the opinions of the newspaper motion picture critics do not, as a rule, go very far, because, despite their adverse crit-

icisms, the public has a chance to find out for themselves whether the picture is or is not entertaining.

This paper advises Eddie Small not to spend any sleepless nights because of the "panning" his picture has received from the critics of the daily newspapers, for the picture pleases the public. And when a picture does that the public will flock to it, despite the wonderment of these critics as to why the public has a good time with it.

BILL GOETZ'S SOUND VIEWS

According to the Hollywood correspondent of *Motion Picture Daily*, William Goetz, president and head producer of International Pictures, stated that a producer's aim should be, not to ascertain the type of pictures that the public wants, but to estimate what type of pictures it will accept. In other words, Mr. Goetz's statement is a repudiation of the picture "cycle," created, not by the public, but by the success of a picture. When a picture, whether it cost little or much, makes an unexpected success, every studio rushes to pattern some of its product after the successful picture, until the public is surfeited and keep away from that type of pictures for a time.

Just to use one example: Eddie Golden's "Hitler's Children" made an unprecedented success, and almost every studio started making this type of pictures. Monogram made a success with "Where Are Your Children?", based on juvenile delinquency, and now the exhibitor may expect a number of pictures patterned on this theme, with the result that after a while the public will scream "enough" of this type of pictures.

Mr. Goetz puts the matter right: a producer should not try to ascertain what pictures the public wants. As it has already been said a few times in these columns, Paramount, when it was founded, made it a habit to enclose in each film shipment a blank with the request to the exhibitor that he fill it out and return it with the shipment, stating how the public liked the picture. This was done with view to guiding the company to produce pictures that would conform with the desires of the public. After a few years the practice was discontinued, because it was, not only an annoyance to the exhibitor, but also a waste of time and effort.

When a producer makes a good picture, no matter on what theme it is founded, the public will accept it, and if it contains certain elements that happen to be in vogue at the time the picture is in release it might make a great success; but if the picture is poor, no matter what tantalizing publicity the distributor might use to draw big crowds into the theatres, the public will not like it and might even be resentful that it had been attracted to the theatres by lurid publicity.

"Roger Touhy, Gangster" with Preston Foster and Victor McLaglen

(20th Century-Fox, July; time, 65 min.)

A fairly good program melodrama of its type. As indicated by the title, the story is based on the exploits of Roger Touhy, the notorious gangster, who, together with members of his gang, made a sensational break from Joliet Prison in 1942. The nationwide publicity given to this jail break enhances the film's box-office value. Mixing fact and fiction, the story follows a conventional gangster-film plot, its chief points of excitement being the reenactment of the gangsters' escape and their eventual capture by the police. It is a swiftly-paced film, filled with excitement and suspense, and representative of the gangster era during Touhy's reign. The ending, in which an official of Joliet Prison tells the audience why crime does not pay, should be eliminated, for the speaker presumes that the audience itself is composed of criminals:—

When Joe Sutton (William Post, Jr.) welches on a gambling debt, Roger Touhy (Preston Foster) and his gang kidnap him and compel his business partner to pay the debt for his release. Sutton, fearful of the gang, refuses to disclose their identity to Police Captain Steve Warren (Kent Taylor), but Warren finally persuades him to do so. The gang is apprehended and brought to trial. Smoke Reardon (Henry Morgan), one of the gang, turns state witness, and the entire gang is sent to prison. Through long years in jail, Touhy sets up a plan for escape, giving each member of his gang specific instructions, which they were to follow at the opportune moment. Outside confederates succeed in smuggling guns into the prison and, carefully following their pre-arranged plan, the gangsters make good their escape. They hide out in a city apartment and succeed in evading the police drag-net. In the meantime the FBI joins Warren's police force in hunting the criminals. When Touhy learns that one of the gang had ventured out into the street to get a drink, he beats the fellow and throws him out of the apartment. Federal agents find the beaten man in a saloon and, through him, get on the trail of the gang, which by this time had separated and found new hideouts. Through clever detective work, the police locate the new hideouts and surround the buildings. Ordered to surrender, two of the gang resist arrest and are promptly shot down. Touhy and the remaining members of his gang, realizing that they were trapped, surrender.

Crane Wilbur and Jerry Cady wrote the screen play, Lee Marcus produced it, and Robert Florey directed it. The cast includes Lois Andrews, Anthony Quinn, Frank Jenks, George E. Stone, Horace MacMahon and others.

Adult entertainment.

"South of Dixie" with Anne Gwynne and David Bruce

(Universal, June 16; time, 61 min.)

Moderately entertaining. It is another in Universal's long line of modestly-budgeted program comedies with music, and it contains little to distinguish it from the others either in story quality, treatment, comedy, or song. The formula remains the same—a flimsy plot and musical interpolations that are dragged in by the ear. The picture lacks human appeal, giving the characters little chance to awaken one's sympathy. For laughs, the characters occasionally beat each other on the head:—

To avert the financial collapse of the music publishing house owned by David Bruce and himself, Jerome Cowan concocts a colorful life story of Bruce and offers it to a motion picture studio for \$100,000. He promotes the deal on the basis that Bruce was a descendant of a famous Southern family, and that he was the rightful "poet laureate" of the South by virtue of his having eulogized the South in his songs. Cowan employs Anne Gwynne, a Southern girl, to teach Bruce the proper Southern accent and manners. Bruce, a clean-cut chap, reluctantly agrees to the scheme. On a tour of the South, the trio are received royally. They experience many narrow escapes trying to avoid being ex-

posed. Bruce even finds his life in constant danger as the result of his meeting a family that had been mortal enemies with the family of which he purportedly was a descendant. Matters become complicated when Cowan, without Bruce's knowledge, arranges for the young man to marry Ella Mae Morse, daughter of Samuel H. Hinds, an influential Southern colonel. Anne, who had fallen in love with Bruce, exposes the hoax to prevent the marriage. The Colonel, instead of being angry, publicly announces the hoax and congratulates Bruce on his cleverness. The trio return to New York dejected, only to find a representative of the motion picture studio awaiting their signature on a contract. His studio wanted to produce Bruce's biography, including the hoax, as a comedy.

Clyde Bruckman wrote the screen play, and Jean Yarbrough produced and directed it. The cast includes Joe Sawyer, Louise Beavers, Bobby Brooks and his Quartette, Lester Cole and the Debutantes, the Charmers and others. Unobjectionable morally.

"Home in Indiana" with Lon McCallister, Walter Brennan, Jeanne Crain and June Haver

(20th Century-Fox, July; time, 104 min.)

Very good! It is an entertaining mixture of exciting horse racing, human interest situations, youthful romance, pretty girls, and some comedy, the sort that should please all audiences. The outdoor Technicolor photography is particularly pleasing to the eye. The film introduces a few newcomers in major parts, and they do exceptionally well. Lon McCallister, who will be remembered as the youngest of the three soldier pals in "Stage Door Canteen," is given a real acting assignment and does justice to the part; his pleasing personality and his performance should increase his popularity. His romance with Jeanne Crain, a charming young lady, is appealing and ends in a manner certain to please spectators. Another newcomer, June Haver, who impresses one as being a junior Betty Grable, should draw many a low whistle from vociferous customers. The other players in the cast are agreeable and awaken one's sympathy. Charlotte Greenwood forsakes her usual role as a comedienne for a straight part—that of a stern but kindly farm woman; and does very well:—

Left alone by the death of his aunt, eighteen-year-old Lon McCallister goes to Roundhouse Farm to live with Walter Brennan, his uncle, an impoverished veteran trainer of trotting horses. For twenty years Brennan had been carrying on a feud with Charles Dingle, his former partner, now a wealthy owner, who trained his horses on an adjoining farm. Lon, a lover of horses, secures a job on Dingle's farm after school hours, and becomes friendly with Jeanne Crain, daughter of Dingle's trainer (Ward Bond), and with June Haver, Dingle's daughter. Learning that Brennan's only horse, now blind, had once been the world's trotting champion, Lon breeds her secretly with one of Dingle's prize stallions. Jeanne and Willie Best, a colored stable-boy, share Lon's secret and aid him into tricking Dingle to sign a registration certificate certifying to the breeding. Brennan, displeased at first, joins the conspiracy. Under Brennan's expert care, Maudeen Four, the filly, grows to be a sorrel beauty. Meanwhile Lon continues his friendship with Jeanne, unaware of her deep love for him. He finds himself fascinated by June, a flirtatious sort. With Lon as the driver, Brennan enters Maudeen Four in a county fair race, but loses when Dingle's driver employs dirty tactics and injures the horse. Lon avenges himself by thrashing the driver. On the day of the most important race of the season a few weeks later, Brennan discovers that Maudeen Four was going blind. He keeps this news to himself, and Lon, ignorant of the horse's affliction, guides her to victory over Dingle's entry. Heartbroken at learning the truth, Lon is comforted by Jeanne, who by this time had made him realize his love for her.

Winston Miller wrote the screen play based on George Agnew Chamberlain's "Phantom Filly," which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. Andre Daven produced it, and Henry Hathaway directed it.

Suitable for all.

"Stars on Parade" with Lynn Merrick and Larry Parks

(Columbia, May 25; time, 64 min.)

Except for a few bright spots here and there, this is just an ordinary program musical, made up of a series of specialty acts and a mere thread of story. At best, it belongs on the lower-half of a double bill. Lacking a substantial plot, the picture depends mostly on the specialties for its entertainment value; for the most part, there is nothing unusual nor outstanding about any of these acts:—

Deciding that the only way they can get into pictures is to show themselves off to the producers, Lynn Merrick and Larry Parks, two Hollywood "hopefuls," set about recruiting others, who, like themselves, were seeking a break. They planned to put on a talent show, to which they would invite the big producers. Ray Walker, a mutual friend and talent agent, offers to help them. After weeks of interviewing different acts, they select those with the most talent and start rehearsals for the big show. One day, when Lynn turns down an aspiring actress, Walker admires her sympathetic handling of the girl and realizes that she has great dramatic ability. He offers Lynn a contract with a major studio, but Lynn, lest her acceptance interfere with Parks' career, refuses the offer. She thanks Walker and gives him a friendly kiss just as Parks enters the room. Parks, thinking that Lynn was unfaithful to him, becomes unresponsive to her. On the night of the big show, as Lynn prepares to do her act with him, Park refuses to join her and reveals to her the reason for his attitude. Robert Williams, a mutual friend, overhears Parks' remarks and informs Walker. Determined that the two youngsters should not lose their opportunity, Walker and Williams tie Parks to a chair and dress him for the act. As Lynn goes onstage and sings a song, Walker explains the kissing incident to Parks and convinces him of Lynn's love. Parks joins Lynn on the stage in time to score a huge success.

Monte Brice wrote the screen play, Wallace MacDonald produced it, and Lew Landers directed it. The cast includes Jeff Donnell, Danny O'Neil, Frank and Jean Hubert, the King Cole Trio, the Ben Carter Choir and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Call of the South Seas" with Janet Martin and Allan Lane

(Republic, July 7; time, 59 min.)

Just an ordinary program melodrama, with a pre-war South Sea island background, typical in story and treatment of pictures of its kind. The story, which revolves around the efforts of two FBI agents to apprehend a powerful plantation owner, a fugitive from justice, has a number of melodramatic episodes, most of which are mechanical, but they are of the type to satisfy the action fans. The picture as a whole shapes up as material of little value, and the players are generally of average calibre, with no marquee value. Numerous stock shots have been used to good advantage:—

Roy Barcroft, an American fugitive, is traced to a French island in the Pacific by the FBI. Barcroft, an influential but unscrupulous plantation owner, conceals his past from the natives under a veneer of good will, and is extremely friendly with Janet Martin, a native princess, who controlled the natives. Allan Lane, an FBI agent, posing as a beachcomber, comes to the island and leads Barcroft to believe that he, too, was a fugitive from justice, having been involved in an embezzlement. Believing that he could use Lane's talents to his advantage, Barcroft offers him a job. Janet falls in love with Lane. As part of the plan to apprehend Barcroft, William Henry, another FBI man, arrives on the island and demands of Duncan Renaldo, the local police chief, that Lane be turned over to him. Renaldo, as expected, refuses, because of Henry's failure to produce extradition papers. Janet, to protect Lane, unwittingly makes Henry's life miserable during his stay on the island. Lane visits Henry one day, unaware of the fact that he was being followed by one of Barcroft's henchmen. Learning that Lane and Henry

were G-men, Barcroft plots to murder them. He succeeds in killing Henry, but fails to find Lane, who was in Renaldo's office presenting extradition papers for his (Barcroft's) arrest. Using a speedy motor launch, Barcroft attempts to escape from the island. Lane and Renaldo pursue him. Barcroft comes to an untimely end, however, when the eruptions of an undersea volcano blows his motor boat to bits. As Lane leaves for the United States, Janet hopes that he will one day return to her.

Albert DeMond wrote the screen play, Walter H. Goetz produced it, and John English directed it. The cast includes Wally Vernon and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Mr. Skeffington" with Bette Davis and Claude Rains

(Warner Bros., no release date set; time, 146 min.)

An outstanding box-office attraction, produced with great care. It is the type of drama that should appeal to the Bette Davis fans, for she enacts a role that is suited to her particular talent—that of a beautiful but selfish woman, whose vanities result in misery for others. Though her performance is a bit too theatrical, credit is due Miss Davis for her acceptance of this role, because the last half required her to make up as an old, haggard woman, one who unsuccessfully strived to be beautiful; the make up is most uncomplimentary to her beauty. It is rather a lengthy film, but it does hold one's attention throughout. There is deep human interest in a number of the situations, awakened by Claude Rains' devotion to his young daughter. Rains, as "Mr. Skeffington," is appealing, winning one's sympathy by his display of fine traits. One of the best situations is that in which Miss Davis takes offense at the advice given her by a blunt psychiatrist, who tells her why her youthful days are over. The story covers the period from 1914 to 1940:—

Bette Davis, a beautiful but spoiled socialite, makes the acquaintance of Claude Rains, a wealthy, Jewish stock broker, when her irresponsible brother (Richard Waring) swindles Rains out of \$25,000. Her family fortune at a low ebb, Bette sets her cap for Rains and marries him, much to the disgust of her brother, who accuses Rains of marrying her to square his debt. Waring indignantly leaves for Europe to join the British Air Force, just prior to World War I. Bette, accustomed to having men fawn over her, continues to receive suitors, but Rains' love for her is so strong that he excuses her vanities. The birth of their daughter makes little difference in her way of life. When word arrives that Waring had been killed in action, Bette blames Rains for having driven her brother to war. As Bette gets older, she takes up with younger men. This leads to a separation, with Rains giving Bette a generous settlement, and with his taking his daughter to Europe to live with him. As the years pass by, Bette, now in her late forties, continues her affairs with younger men and takes extreme pride in her youthful appearance. With war eminent in Europe, her daughter (Marjorie Riordan), now a young woman of eighteen, whom she had not seen since a child, returns to live with Bette, much to her annoyance. Marjorie informs Bette that Rains was in Berlin, unable to leave the country because he was a Jew. Soon after Marjorie's arrival Bette is stricken with a serious illness that leaves her old and haggard. She goes to extremes to keep up a youthful appearance, but eventually comes to the realization that she is really old. Heartbroken, she secludes herself. Meanwhile Rains escapes from a concentration camp and returns home. Bette's vanity makes it difficult for her to face him, but when she becomes aware of the fact that he had been blinded by the Nazis, and realizes that to him she will always be beautiful, she takes him in her arms and faces life anew.

Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein wrote the screen play and produced it. Vincent Sherman directed it. The cast includes Walter Abel, George Coulouris, Robert Shayne, Jerome Cowan, Dorothy Peterson, Walter Kingsford and many others.

Unobjectionable morally.

DON'T GET EXCITED ABOUT TELEVISION

The recent discussion of television on the radio and in the press have frightened many of you into thinking that the advent of this art, following the cessation of hostilities, may make the operation of your theatre profitless, unless you will be among the first ones to install a television screen.

I may say to you that it is not necessary for you to spend a sleepless night, for just at present, and for some time to come, there is no danger to your investment from that source.

This paper has written about television once before, in 1938 when every exhibitor became frightened as a result of the many statements, either in the newspapers or the trade press, about television. It is again gathering information from those who are in a position to know what advance this new art has made, and what are its chances of either hurting the picture theatres or helping them. The findings will be printed in these columns.

"Johnny Doesn't Live Here Anymore" with Simone Simon, James Ellison and William Terry

(Monogram, May 27; time, 79 min.)

An amusing program comedy-farce. The story idea—that of a young marine who subleases his apartment to a young girl; but who neglects to inform her that he had given keys to many of his friends—is novel, and with a bit more care it might have turned into a hilarious comedy. As it is, it should have no difficulty satisfying non-discriminating audiences, for the complications that arise are laugh-provoking, even though slapstick is often resorted to. Chief flaw in the film is the unintelligible dialogue spoken by Simone Simon, because of her accent and of her mumbling way of speaking her lines. The ending is both suspenseful and comical, and should cause customers to leave the theatre with a smile. The production has a better than average cast:—

En route to Washington to a war plant job, Simone Simon upsets a salt shaker and is confronted by a "gremlin" who informs her that she will have seven weeks of bad luck. Upon arrival, Simone learns that a friend with whom she planned to live had just been married and that she (Simone) would have to find other quarters. She meets William Terry, about to be inducted as a Marine, and persuades him to let her sublet his apartment. She escorts him to his train and falls in love with him. Returning to the apartment, Simone finds one of Terry's friends there, and learns that Terry had given keys to the apartment to a number of his friends. One of the key-holders, James Ellison, a sailor, is found in the apartment by Simone when she returns home from work one evening. She falls in love with him, too. Terry and Ellison eventually learn that they are in love with the same girl and, to complicate matters, both misunderstand when they discover a strange sailor entering the apartment. The stranger had borrowed the key from one of Terry's friends, intending to occupy the apartment with his wife. Terry and Ellison barge into the apartment and a free-for-all fight ensues. All are brought before Alan Dinehart, a police judge, who tries to unravel the mixup with little success. Dinehart finally orders

Simone to choose between Terry and Ellison, but she refuses to do so until midnight, the end of her period of bad luck. As the clock strikes twelve, the story jumps to the year 1949, when, in a gag finish, it is shown that Simone had married the judge.

Philip Yordan and John H. Kafka wrote the screen play from an original story by Alice Means Reeve. The cast includes Chick Chandler, Minna Gombel, Chester Clute, Bob Mitchum and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Ladies of Washington" with Sheila Ryan, Trudy Marshall and Anthony Quinn

(20th Century-Fox, June; time 61 min.)

A passable program melodrama, but a weak box-office attraction. For one thing, it lacks star names; and for another, the story neither directs an appeal to the emotions of sympathy, nor has it an appealing romance, except for a secondary romance, which has little to do with the main plot. Moreover, the story is artificial; it is also somewhat unpleasant, for the actions of the heroine are motivated by selfishness and revenge. The story takes place in war-time Washington, and the housing shortage is brought into play for comedy. As a matter of fact the film is an equal mixture of comedy and lurid melodrama, but fails to attain a high spot in either phase:—

Learning that Sheila Ryan, her old college chum, could not find living quarters, Trudy Marshall, a SPAR, invites her to live in her cooperative apartment, which she shared with a group of other girls. Sheila, a "good time" girl, soon wins the dislike of her roommates by her selfish disposition. Having had an affair with her former employer (Pierre Watkin), a wealthy executive, who dropped her when he became reconciled with his wife, Sheila stages a fake suicide in an attempt to smear his name. Her plan fails, however, when Dr. Donald Graham, Trudy's fiancé, learns of her motive and shields Watkin's name from the newspapers. Robert Bailey, Graham's assistant, takes Sheila home from the hospital and falls in love with her. She returns Bailey's love, but, behind his back, carries on an affair with Anthony Quinn, a handsome foreigner, unaware that he was a secret Nazi agent. Telling Sheila that a radio analyst would pay them a huge sum of money for the war production figures of her former employer, Quinn induces her to help him gain entrance to Watkin's office. While opening the safe, Quinn is shot and he, in turn, kills a watchman. Sheila helps Quinn to escape and telephones Bailey for help, telling him that Quinn is her brother. Bailey performs an emergency operation on a houseboat owned by Graham, but Quinn dies. To protect Sheila, Bailey does not report Quinn's death. When the police find Quinn's body and discover evidence that he had been operated on Graham's houseboat, they hold Graham for questioning. Bailey absolves his friend by making a complete confession to the police. Sheila, trapped, tries to place the blame on Bailey, but the police prove her story false. Bailey is cured of his infatuation, and Sheila, her mind gone, is committed to an insane asylum.

Wanda Tuchock wrote the screen play, William Girard produced it, and Louis King directed it. The cast includes Beverly Whitney, Jackie Haley, John Philliber, Edna Mae Jones and others.

Adult entertainment.

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HEADED FOR THE BRINK!

The steady increase in the number of pictures that are sold on an advanced admission price policy, and the harmful effect this practice is having on the exhibitors, has been treated so forcefully by Jay Emanuel, publisher of *The Exhibitor*, in an editorial that appeared in the May 24 issue of his trade paper, that HARRISON'S REPORTS takes the liberty of reproducing it in the belief that it will do much good if brought to the attention of as many exhibitors as possible. The editorial, headed "A Problem for Allied," is as follows:

"When the Allied Caravan and the Allied national board meet this week in Philadelphia, one of the principal pieces of business will be the problem of distributors making certain pictures available at advanced admissions under selling plans which virtually take possession of the theatres away from the exhibitors who play them for the duration of the engagements.

"The advanced admission price picture is the product of the war, the distributors testing what the traffic could bear, and then cashing in on it. In every case advanced prices have not been successful, but the distributors' books will undoubtedly show that they have found it profitable, and by removing the cream they do not destroy future profits for themselves.

"The history of the advanced admission price growth reveals that at first the distributors were cautious, and asked only a slight increase in admissions. These proved generally successful, and the distributors were satisfied to get their increased share out of the gross without asking exorbitant percentage. This eventually brought the present policy, where the exhibitor plays the picture at a top percentage, with the distributor, after checking the exhibitor's books, allowing him a definite profit. If this practice grows it will not be long before the exhibitor will be in business only for the distributor, and not for himself. When that point is reached, he may as well quit the field. The first recent advanced price engagement of consequence was 'Gone With the Wind,' a success. Other distributors (and this department has always contended that distributors are not averse to copying successful methods of other companies) followed.

"Of course, it does not follow that every advanced price engagement is a success. In many cases, 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' did not ring the bell, and there have been instances where 'The Song of Bernadette' did not prove an outstanding success. The story of 'The Adventures of Mark Twain' is also interesting. Backed by an outstanding merchandising campaign, a picture which has considerable merit hit considerable opposition to advanced prices in certain areas.

"What concerns the exhibitors more than the distributors is that when normal grosses return, many patrons will remember these increased price pictures, and they will bear little good will toward the theatres. Others scoff at this theory, and declare that, 'as long as everybody is getting it now, we should, too, and it won't make any difference later.'

They forget that motion pictures made their start as 'poor man's entertainment.' But not at these prices.

"At any rate, the problem is one that must be considered in a serious light. We trust that the Caravan and the Allied board will give it proper attention."

Jay Emanuel has put his finger on an important trade problem, and HARRISON'S REPORTS is in full agreement with his views.

In these days of high living costs and inflated prices, there isn't one of us but has become vexed at either a shopkeeper or some other purveyor of goods or of service, because of a feeling that they were taking undue advantage of the present situation under the guise that war conditions were responsible for their abnormal increase in prices. Many of us have vowed to remember these fellows when normal times are reestablished.

In the motion picture industry, it is the exhibitor, and not the producer or the distributor, who is looked upon by the public as the purveyor of entertainment. Consequently, though the public is geared for a slight increase over pre-war admission prices, it soon shows its resentment against exorbitant admission prices, and this resentment is directed against the exhibitor, who depends on good will for the successful operation of his theatre. And the sad part of it all is that the exhibitor is blameless; few of his patrons are aware of the fact that he is compelled to advance his admission price on a picture in order to uphold the prestige of his theatre. They do not know that, if he fails to book the picture during the advanced price run, it may not become available to him under general release until many months later, and that, by then, many of them may have seen the picture elsewhere and they will look upon the general release showing as a "johnny-come-lately," thus lowering the prestige of his theatre.

HARRISON'S REPORTS does not condemn the advanced admission price policy so long as the industry practices it with restraint: that is, reserving such a policy for the truly outstanding pictures, the sort that will make patrons feel that it was worth an extra admission price to see, and provided these pictures will be sold under terms that would leave the exhibitor with a just share of the profits for his efforts, instead of his feeling that he is no more than a ten-percent commission agent for the distributor.

But how can this restraint be exercised under the present spending spree of the producers? Hardly a week goes by without an announcement from some studio that it is contemplating the production of a picture costing anywhere from two to four million dollars, and even more. The cost of these pictures is so high that the distributors cannot help but contemplate the exhibition of them at advanced prices in order to recoup the cost. But there is a limit to how many advanced admission price pictures the market can absorb, for, as Mr. Emanuel says, the motion picture is essentially "a poor man's entertainment." And for the producers to lose sight of this fact is to invite disaster.

(Continued on last page)

**"Underground Guerrillas" with
John Clements, Mary Morris
and Stephen Murray**

(Columbia, May 18; time, 83 min.)

A fair British-made war melodrama, but a weak box-office attraction. For one thing, the players are not known in this country; for another, their "thick" English accent makes most of the dialogue unintelligible; for still another, the story, which revolves around "underground" resistance in Yugoslavia, is neither novel nor unusual, having been done many times in recent war films. The story's treatment follows a conventional pattern, depicting individual acts of heroism and self-sacrifice, as well as acts of Nazi brutality. Its best reception should be among the action fans, for the battles between the guerrillas and the Nazis are exciting:—

When the Nazis invade Yugoslavia and shatter organized resistance, John Clements, a Yugoslavian army officer, becomes the head of a band of guerrillas whose mission it was to harass the German forces. During one of their sorties in a peasant village, Godfrey Tearle, Nazi military commander of the district, is wounded. He is operated on by Stephen Murray, Clements' brother, head of the local hospital, who seizes the opportunity to win Tearle's confidence and to use it in behalf of the guerrillas. Meanwhile the Nazis seize Mary Morris, Clements' wife and local schoolmistress, and try to bully her into disclosing her husband's whereabouts. Their brutality fails, however, and Anna, aided by a few of her pupils, escapes into the mountains to the guerrillas' hideout. She is joined there by Clements' elderly parents, who, too, offer to risk their lives for their country. The climax of the story is reached when the military governor asks Murray to contact his brother and to offer him a bribe to halt the guerrilla warfare. Feigning interest in the proposition, Murray secures passage on an ammunition train and sacrifices his life by blowing it up. The explosion blocks a railroad tunnel and prevents the Germans from bringing reinforcements to a clash between their troops and Clements' guerrillas.

John Dighton and M. Danishevsky wrote the screen play, Michael Balcon produced it, and Sergei Nolbandov directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Candlelight in Algeria" with James Mason
and Carla Lehmann**

(20th Century-Fox, July; time, 85 min.)

Made in Britain, this is an engaging program melodrama, centering around espionage and counter-espionage activities. The action takes place in Algeria, prior to the Allied invasion of North Africa, and the producer has tried, rather clumsily, to tie in the far-fetched story with the now historic secret meeting of the Allied military leaders who mapped out the invasion campaign. Despite the story's shortcomings, the action is fast and the heroics, though fantastic, are exciting. Its chief drawback for American theatres is the fact that the players are not known well here. Otherwise they perform well:—

On the eve of her return from Algeria to the United States to join the WACS, Carla Lehmann gives refuge to Captain James Mason, a British intelligence officer, who was hunted by Walter Rilla, shrewd head of the German Armistice Commission in Algeria. Mason pleads with Carla to remain in Algeria to help him obtain a camera that contained an unexposed film showing the secret meeting place on the coast of Algeria where Allied military leaders were to meet to plan the invasion of North Africa. Mason explains that a friend of his had left the camera in the home of a prominent French actress, who did not know of its important contents. Rilla knew of the existence of the film, but did not know of its whereabouts. Unaware of the fact that Rilla's men were following her every move, Carla, by bribing the actress' maid, gains entrance into the home and filches the camera. But

before being able to hand the camera over to Mason, she is apprehended by Rilla's men. Rilla, positive that Mason would attempt to rescue Carla, takes her to a hotel so as to lure him into a trap. Mason, however, outsmarts Rilla by impersonating a waiter and throwing him off guard. He rescues Carla and takes her to his hideout in the Casbah. Rilla traces Mason to the hideout and prepares to shoot him upon learning that the film had been destroyed, but Carla, hiding in a secret compartment, knocks Rilla unconscious. As they flee, one of Mason's underground confederates informs him that the Nazis had learned that the Allied leaders were to meet that night. Taking Rilla's fast car, Mason and Carla lead the Nazis on a merry chase away from the secret meeting place, thus making it possible for the Allied leaders to conclude their meeting without detection, and eventually to stage their successful invasion. Unobjectionable morally.

Brock Williams and Katherine Strueby wrote the screen play, John Stafford produced it, and George King directed it.

**"The Canterville Ghost" with
Charles Laughton, Margaret O'Brien
and Robert Young**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 95 min.)

A highly entertaining comedy; it should go over with all types of audiences. Based on Oscar Wilde's famous play about a weak-kneed, three-hundred-year-old, ghost, who had been doomed to roam about an English castle until a kinsman performed an act of bravery in his name, the story has been re-written and brought up to date with very good comedy results. Charles Laughton, as the cowardly ghost who turns into flesh-and-blood at will, is at his best. His appearance before a platoon of American Rangers, billeted in the castle, who scoff at his attempts to scare them and, instead, frighten him off themselves, should provoke peals of laughter. The action is filled with situations equally funny, particularly the one where Laughton and Robert Young get rid of a delayed action bomb. Margaret O'Brien, as six-year-old Lady Jessica de Canterville, is as winsome and appealing as ever. Her performance is one of the brightest spots:—

Walled alive by his father in 1624 for having shown cowardice in a duel, and his ghost condemned to roam until one of his kinsmen performed a brave deed, Sir Simon de Canterville (Charles Laughton) haunts Canterville Castle for more than three centuries, vainly waiting for a brave kinsman to free him. With the coming of World War II, a platoon of American Rangers are billeted in the castle. Little Jessica greets them and warns them against the ghost. That night the ghost appears, but is frightened off by the Rangers. Noticing Jessica's fear of her legendary ancestor, Cuffy Williams (Robert Young), one of the Rangers, suggests that they visit the ghost. They enter Sir Simon's chamber and find him in a dejected mood because of his inability to frighten the Rangers. Jessica, who had never seen Sir Simon, finds him to be a human but unhappy ghost, weary of the curse that befell him. In the course of events, Sir Simon and Jessica discover that Cuffy is a de Canterville descendant. Delighted, Sir Simon looks to Cuffy to commit an act of bravery in his name. But the realization that all de Cantervilles for three centuries had been cowards has a psychological effect on Cuffy, and he disgraces himself during a commando raid on France. As Cuffy prepares to quit the Rangers at the suggestion of his commanding officer, Jessica discovers a delayed action bomb, which had been dropped by parachute by a Nazi plane. Encouraged by Jessica, and aided by Sir Simon, Cuffy hitches the bomb to an army jeep and hauls it to a ravine, where it explodes without doing damage. Cuffy's act restores confidence in himself, and it permits the ghost to go to his grave in peace.

Edwin Harvey Blum wrote the screen play, Arthur L. Field produced it, and Jules Dassin directed it. The cast includes William Gargan, "Rags" Raglund, Una O'Connor, Elisabeth Risdon and others.

"Waterfront" with J. Carrol Naish and John Carradine

(PRC, June 10; time, 65 min.)

Just a moderately interesting program espionage melodrama. The story, which deals with the machinations of Nazi spies operating in San Francisco, is muddled and unbelievable, and it has been given an unimaginative treatment. The only reason why one's attention is held at all is owed to the good work of J. Carrol Naish and John Carradine, as the spies. As a matter of fact, their performances are superior to the material. Not much can be said for the work of the supporting cast:—

Naish, an optometrist with a long established office, uses his business to cover up his Nazi activities. He coerces loyal German-Americans into cooperating with him, threatening harm to their families in Germany if they refuse. Edwin Maxwell, a shipping head and one of Naish's unwilling collaborators, determines to hamper Naish's activities. Through John Bliefer, a waterfront saloon-keeper, Maxwell hires a thug to hold up Naish to steal a secret code book from him. Carradine, a visiting Nazi agent, tracks down the thug and kills him, but he fails to obtain the code book. He decides to remain in San Francisco until it is found and, using typical Gestapo methods, compels Olga Fabian, a middle-aged German-American woman, to give him accommodations in her rooming house. Meanwhile Bliefer, who had the code book, double-crosses Maxwell by offering the book to Naish for a price. Carradine visits Bliefer, who had the code book and forcing him to reveal that Maxwell had arranged for the hold up, kills him. Maxwell, fearing for his life, arranges to leave town. He telephones last minute instructions to Maris Wrixon, his secretary and Miss Fabian's daughter, telling her that he would pick up certain papers at his office late that night. Carradine, overhearing the conversation, goes to the office and murders Maxwell. When Naish protests that the murders will draw attention to their activities, Carradine kills him too. Through circumstantial evidence and mistaken identity, Terry Frost, Maris' fiancé, who had business dealings with Maxwell, is held for the shipping head's murder. But Carradine's habit of "doodling," which he had practiced at each of the killings, eventually leads to his detection and arrest for the crime.

Irwin R. Franklyn and Martin Mooney wrote the screen play, Arthur Alexander produced it, and Steve Sekely directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"A Night of Adventure" with Tom Conway and Audrey Lang

(RKO, no release date set; time, 65 min.)

This is one of the most intelligently written, produced and directed pictures of this program series, if we are to classify it as one of the Falcon group. Though the action unfolds mostly in a court room, the proceedings are so intelligent that one's interest is held tense. The reason for it is the fact that the spectator fears lest the hero, involved in an accidental death, be accused of, what appeared to be, a crime. What pleases one mostly is the clever way by which the hero, thanks to the author, outwits the gangster leader, who was trying to pin a charge of murder on him. There is romance, of course, but this deals mostly with the dissatisfaction of the hero's wife, because her husband, on account of his work, was compelled to neglect her. But everything is settled amicably in the end:—

Because Tom Conway, a famous attorney in criminal cases and the nemesis of gangsters, is compelled to neglect his wife (Audrey Long) because of his work, Audrey moves to a different apartment and leaves no forwarding address. Upon his return from a trip, however, Tom is able to trace her. But she refuses to return to him until she gets a chance to think matters over. Learning that she kept company with Louis Borell, an artist, Tom goes to Borell's apartment. But instead of finding his wife there, he finds Jean Brooks, a

former model of Borell's, highly intoxicated and threatening to kill Borell with a gun when he showed up. While Tom attempts to wrest the gun from her, it goes off and Jean is killed. Thinking that no one had seen him, Tom leaves hurriedly. Russell Hopton, tool of a gangster leader, sees him; he takes the gloves that Tom had forgotten on the telephone box outside the hall and puts them near the dead girl. Borell is arrested for the crime and brought to trial. Tom, who had been persuaded by his wife to defend Borell, breaks down one witness after another until Hopton goes to Addison Richards, the district attorney, and implicates Tom. Richards moves for a dismissal of the case on the grounds that new evidence proved Borell innocent; he planned to demand Tom's arrest. Richards places Hopton on the stand and, when he accuses Tom of the murder, Tom cross examines him and demands his arrest as the unidentified person who had left the room after the killing. Hopton, dreading a charge of murder, retracts his charges against Tom. While Tom and Audrey are driven home by Ed Brophy, their trusted chauffeur, Tom tells his wife that, through Hopton, he would reach the gangster leader and thus clean the city of criminals, with the aid of Richards.

Crane Wilbur wrote the screen play, Herman Schlom produced it, and Gordon Douglas directed it.

There are slight sex implications, but they are too subtle for children to understand.

"Bathing Beauty" with Red Skelton, Esther Williams and Basil Rathbone

(MGM, no release date set; time, 101 min.)

Lively and gay, this latest in MGM's roster of glittering Technicolor musicals should be received well by the rank and file of picture-goers. The story is a nonsensical affair, revolving around a young man who gains admittance as a student in an exclusive girls' school, but it does serve as a handy framework for Red Skelton's gags and comedy antics, most of which keep the spectators laughing throughout. His dancing (in a proper costume) with a group of girls in a ballet dancing class is an hilarious sequence. The picture's finale, a water ballet featuring Esther Williams, is one of the most elaborate production numbers ever brought to the screen. Miss Williams is not only an expert swimmer and an outstanding beauty, but also a promising actress; she does good work as the girl Skelton pursues. Added entertainment, as well as marquee, value is to be found in the tuneful music furnished by Harry James' and Xavier Cugat's orchestras, with singing by Helen Forrest and Lina Romay:—

Red Skelton, a songwriter, loafes away his time romancing with Esther Williams, a school teacher vacationing in Mexico, instead of composing songs for a Broadway musical to be produced by Basil Rathbone. Angry at Skelton's failure to deliver the songs, Rathbone flies to Mexico and arrives just as Skelton and Esther are being married. He bribes a stage-struck girl to assert that she is Skelton's wife, thereby causing Esther to leave Skelton immediately after the ceremony. Esther returns to an exclusive girls' school, where she teaches. Skelton follows her, but she refuses to see him. Learning that the school had a co-educational charter, Skelton applies for enrollment so that he may be near Esther. The faculty grudgingly accepts him as a student, but determines to oust him by penalizing him with demerits at the slightest infringement of any of the school's rules. Every obstacle possible is thrown in Skelton's way to make his school stay miserable, but he endures it all to be near his wife. After a series of incidents, in which Esther rouses his jealousy by feigning a romance with a young professor, Skelton discovers that it was Rathbone who had framed him. He reveals this to Esther, winning a reconciliation.

Dorothy Kingsley, Allen Boretz and Frank Waldman wrote the screen play. Jack Cummings produced it, and George Sidney directed it. The cast includes Donald Meek, Carlos Ramirez and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

Yet at the rate the multi-million dollar productions are being made, it is apparent that the producers have lost their sense of proportion. Just to give you an idea of what to expect in the future, here is a list of multi-million dollar pictures, most of which are completed, which, according to reports in the trade press or to definite announcements by the distributors, will be given an advanced admission price treatment:

MGM's "Dragon Seed," "America" and "Ziegfeld Follies"; Warner Brothers' "Rhapsody in Blue" and "Saratoga Trunk"; Paramount's "Frenchmen's Creek"; 20th Century-Fox's "Wilson," and, perhaps, "Keys of the Kingdom"; and David O. Selznick's "Since You Went Away."

How many of the other multi-million dollar pictures, either contemplated or in production, will be sold on a similar policy is not yet known.

The producers had better take stock. An excessive number of these high-cost pictures cannot do either the exhibitors or themselves any good. One of these days, perhaps sooner than most of us expect, we are going to return to normal times and normal grosses. Let us not find ourselves in the position of the little boy who ate too much candy and ended up with an old-fashioned bellyache.

"THE GEORGE DEMBOW TRIBUTE"

Beginning June 5, and ending December 31, the field forces of National Screen Service will carry on a sales drive in order to enroll the few remaining exhibitors who have not yet joined the great body of exhibitors using National Screen Service trailers and accessories.

The drive has been named by Herman Robbins, the president of the company, "The George Dembow Tribute," in honor of the man who for twelve years has won the hearts, not only of the company's employees, but also of every exhibitor as well as distributor who has known him, either in business dealings or socially. Mr. Robbins felt that the name, "George Dembow," would lend to the sales personnel of the company an incentive far beyond the inducement of material reward for the successful prosecution of the drive.

A few of the National Screen Service employees that I have spoken to feel that George Dembow's experience in production, distribution and exhibition has given him an understanding that enables him to determine a sales policy that, though profitable to the company, offers economies and benefits to the exhibitors they serve.

HARRISON'S REPORTS suggests to the exhibitors to join the National Screen Service employees in making this drive a success so as to show their appreciation to the company that always comes to the forefront whenever its services are requested for a worthy cause.

BEWARE OF "GOOD" WAR PICTURES

The question of war pictures has been agitating the minds, not only of the exhibitors, but also of the producers. Polls have been taken among the picture-going public and the findings always have been that the public is surfeited with war pictures. But when any one protests against the continual producing of war pictures, a distributor pooh-poohs the protest by pointing to the outstanding box-office results of some successful war pictures.

Since the majority of war pictures present a selling problem nowadays, the exhibitor must learn to differentiate between good war pictures and unusual war pictures. In other words, the fact that a war picture may be good is no guarantee that the public will flock to see it; such a picture must present something unusual either in story or in treatment, for many a good war picture has "flopped" at the box-office.

Take, for instance, "None Shall Escape": this is a good war picture, but, according to reports, particularly those in

the bulletins of the Independent Exhibitors Forum, of Cincinnati, it has "flopped." In presenting the exhibitors' comments, Miss Ann Welling, secretary of the Forum, states the following:

"Columbia's 'None Shall Escape' is another example of their top pictures. It flopped wherever it played and should have been released on a low rental basis. It is less than an ordinary program picture. No more than a \$15 feature on a \$50 'average' contract."

In its review, which was published in the January 8 issue, HARRISON'S REPORTS foresaw, in a way, the picture's possible box-office failure, for even though it pronounced the picture good it said: "Whether or not your patrons desire this type of entertainment today is a matter that you must judge for yourself."

Subscribers of HARRISON'S REPORTS should read the reviews on war pictures carefully to find out whether such pictures do or do not possess unusual features, even when the players that appear in the leading roles are popular, for the public resentment to war pictures may take in even the stars themselves.

STUDIOS ON A SPENDING SPREE

Inspired by the unusual theatre prosperity as a result of the war, the studios are getting more ambitious every day and are spending millions on some pictures that, in normal times, would be kept within a million dollar budget. The expenditure of three million dollars on a picture is no longer a novelty but almost a rule. As a matter of fact, every major studio is now geared up on million dollar pictures.

The industry is now in a trance. What will happen when we come out of the trance? For come out of it we must, after the war, even if it takes a little time.

What will happen then? The studios, having been geared to million dollar pictures, will not be able to readjust themselves, and they will continue paying unheard of sums for either stage plays or best sellers, but the market will not be able to absorb the costs, with the result that we may have bankruptcies such as those that occurred immediately after the 1929 depression.

Some of the studios may begin to retrench then, but we pretty nearly know what the effect of retrenchment will be—pictures that will drive the public away from the theatres.

The studios of the smaller companies can profit from the mistakes of the bigger studios by expanding, well enough, but by keeping the expenses to a point where, when the awakening comes, they will not suffer to the same extent as the bigger studios. Let them spend more money in buying good stories and in treating them well rather than spend the money on lavish and huge sets, as well as on over-rated stage plays and novels. It will pay them in the end.

Recently, while I was discussing the present spending spree with a friend of mine, who is in the business, he was reminded of some sage advice given to him by the late Marcus Loew at a time when the Loew theatres were "coining" money. In the midst of this prosperity, Loew issued instructions to his theatre managers to cut expenses to the bone and to institute a general program of economy.

My friend, who worked for Mr. Loew at the time, queried him as to the reasons for such instructions. Loew replied that it was no trick to cut expenses or economize during bad times, because the lack of revenue went hand in hand with economy. "The time to train your people how to save money," continued Mr. Loew, "is when it is plentiful. It is only during good times that you are able to fortify yourself against bad times."

Both exhibitors and producers should heed the advice given to my friend by the late Marcus Loew.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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INDUSTRY'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING EUROPE'S INVASION

The motion picture industry has come forward with its services whenever a national cause was to be served, and it will continue offering them whenever they are needed. But there is another service that the industry can perform, of as great a value as any of the other services—that of avoiding from presenting to the public pictures that will make a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, or any other relative or even friend spend an aching moment.

Showing in a picture that a husband has returned to his wife at home either blinded, or with a lost limb, or with some other injury received from performing a heroic act may be dramatic, and may even bring tears to the eyes, but it is not entertainment to any wife who has a husband fighting somewhere for the liberation of the world, or to the boy's mother, sister, brother, or sweetheart—it is a sight that tortures his or her heart.

There came to my attention recently a real life incident concerning a married couple that live in the apartment house where I live. They have a son, not yet twenty years old, fighting somewhere in Burma. They had not heard from him for several weeks. A remark made to the boy's mother as to his possible death being the cause of her not receiving any news from him was so cruel that the boy's mother went into jitters and had not closed an eye for nights in succession, until she received a letter from one of the boy's friends in India informing her that the boy was well, but that he was on a secret mission, and our military authorities had forbidden members of that mission from mentioning where they were stationed.

The showing of pictures in which much blood is shed should be avoided just now, lest the sight of blood send horror into the heart of each of those who have someone fighting in a front, particularly in the European front. The production of such pictures should be avoided for the present. From now on we are going to have enough blood shed to do without it in pictures.

THERE IS GOING TO BE A DROP OF ATTENDANCE IN THEATRES

During the invasion plunge in Europe and until we know that our military authorities have the situation well in hand, people will sit by their radios listening in with the hope that with each tuning some good news may be broadcast. And they will be sending for the latest editions of the papers with the hope that they might find in them something that the radio announcers have not yet received.

You can do a great deal, not only to bolster up your business, but also to relieve anxiety in those who have some one fighting in the European theatre of war. You may make arrangements with your local radio station as well as your local newspaper to send you the news as fast as they receive them so that, between shows, features or shorts, you may interrupt the performance to give them the latest news.

Your act will be considered humanitarian from two viewpoints: first, the picture will take their minds off the war, and second, from the fact that the anxiety will be less if

they are in a theatre than if they had stayed home listening in.

Avoid as much as possible showing depressing pictures; prefer comedies. I am sure that the film companies will be glad to cooperate with you in shelving depressing pictures temporarily.

NATIONAL SCREEN SERVICE'S "MISTER SHOWMAN"

The other day I happened to come across a copy of "Mister Showman," the house organ that National Screen Service puts out and I was so impressed with the valuable information it conveys to the exhibitors, that I called up the National Screen Service home office and I requested additional copies with a view to studying them and letting the exhibitors know how much they miss if they should either not receive a copy of this monthly bulletin or receive it but do not pay much attention to it.

Each number informs the exhibitors of the month's events and advises him how to prepare for them with a view to helping his box office. For instance:

The June number informs the exhibitors that June 14 is Flag Day and suggests how they should go about it to draw patrons to the box office. The article under the heading, "That's Show Business," by which it details a story of the results obtained by business people who are polite to their customers is worth reading. Wedding ceremonies performed on the stage should prove a box office stimulant for theatres that resort to such stunts. June 18 is Father's Day. The "Mister Showman" gives many hints that are helpful to the box office. In a double page at the center of the book there are hints on how an exhibitor may use lighted posters to attract the attention of the passers-by as well as of the patrons while entering the theatre. Under the heading "Exploit Graduation," there are many helpful suggestions that may be used during graduation. In the following pages the editor suggests to the exhibitors even how to cool their theatres.

The July number, not yet out, will contain many valuable suggestions for the special events of that month. National Screen will offer Fourth of July trailers, either in black or in Technicolor, showing the American flag waving. There will be suggestions for "kiddy" shows during the summer vacation, a fact which can help a great deal to eradicate juvenile delinquency. There will be for sale trailers advertising the Fifth War Loan Drive, urging the public to buy bonds. There will be a trailer for the celebration of the 168th Anniversary of the Birth of Freedom in this country, and through this country's influence almost all over the world. There will be trailers available to the exhibitors informing the public that special sections of the theatre have been set aside for children who attend the shows, with a matron supervising them, and many other suggestions.

No exhibitor can afford to be without a copy of "Mister Showman" for it relieves him of the necessity of watching his calendar to find out the holidays for that month. But even if it were no trouble to him to watch the calendar, he will have to think out his own exploitation ideas, whereas "Mister Showman" has a wealth of suggestions, which he can if he chooses, enrich with his own exploitation ideas.

LET'S ALL BACK THE INVASION! SELL INVASION BONDS!

"Hail the Conquering Hero" with Eddie Bracken, William Demarest and Ella Raines

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 101 min.)

A thoroughly entertaining comedy-drama. The fact that it lacks stellar star names should not have much of an effect on its box-office possibilities, for it is the sort of picture that patrons recommend to one another. The original story, which was written, produced and directed by Preston Sturges, is a totally unbelievable one about a young man who becomes the unwilling victim of a hoax perpetrated on his mother and friends by well-meaning pals. But so expertly has Sturges handled this blend of human interest, high comedy, and romance, that the spectator finds himself laughing heartily one moment and, on the next, feeling a tug on the heart-strings. The characterizations by the cast are done very well, with high honors going to Eddie Bracken, as the confused young man who wants to tell the truth about himself, and William Demarest, as the tough Marine sergeant, who persists in his efforts to build up Bracken as a hero:—

Let out of the Marines after serving one month because of a chronic hay fever, Bracken is ashamed to go home; his father had been a World War I hero, and he felt that his mother and his home-town folk expected great things from him. In order not to disillusion them, he had arranged with pals to mail his letters home from Guadalcanal, and wrote Ella Raines, his sweetheart, that he had fallen in love with another girl. Meanwhile he kept away from home, working in a shipyard. When six Marine heroes, just returned from Guadalcanal, hear his story, they decide to take matters in hand. Despite Eddie's protests, they telephone to his mother that he had just returned as a hero with minor wounds, and that he had been given an honorable discharge. They induce him to don his uniform, pin their medals on him, and take him home. When the train pulls into the station, Bracken is astounded to see that the whole town had turned out to give him a hero's welcome. His attempts to explain the hoax are frustrated by his well-meaning marine pals, who add to his embarrassment by telling stories of his "heroic deeds." His embarrassment mounts when the townspeople draft him to run for mayor against Raymond Walburn, the incumbent, whose son had become engaged to Ella. Realizing that the truth will eventually be found out, and that his mother will feel disgraced, Bracken attends a political rally and courageously confesses to the townspeople. Ella, proud of Bracken's courage, breaks her engagement to the Mayor's son and tells Bracken that she intended to stick by his side. Meanwhile William Demarest, one of the Marines, explains to the townspeople that he and his pals were responsible for Bracken's troubles. The people decide that Bracken had proved his honesty and elect him as their new Mayor.

The cast includes Jimmie Dundee, Georgia Cane, Freddie Steele, Franklin Pangborn and others.

"The Great Moment" with Joel McCrea, Betty Field, Harry Carey and William Demarest

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 78 min.)

This is another very entertaining comedy-drama, written, produced and directed by Preston Sturges. The story, which is supposedly biographical of the success and heartaches of Dr. William T. G. Morton, the Boston dentist who a century ago had discovered and developed the use of anaesthesia, has been given a typical Sturges treatment, in which he brings out, with hilarious results, the humorous aspects of the doctor's experiments with ether, and yet gives them a proper dramatic touch, filled with human interest. Unlike most pictures dealing with scientific discoveries, the action in this one moves swiftly and, on occasion, holds one in suspense. The good acting of the players is not the least of the picture's assets. The period is 1850, and the styles and customs of that day, have been adhered to carefully.

In an apparent effort to avoid giving the picture an unhappy ending, because Dr. Morton had died in poverty, a figure of ridicule, Sturges has resorted to two flashbacks in the telling of the story. The first flashback shows how the doctor (Joel McCrea), having sacrificed personal gain to give his secret away for the benefit of mankind, receives word that Congress had voted him a reward of \$100,000. But jealous medical rivals induce President Pierce to veto the bill, and inflame the newspapers into ridiculing Morton for seeking to profit from his discovery. The second flashback deals with the doctor's early career, at which time he was wracking his brain to find a means by which dentistry could be made painless, so that his patients would not fear him. His search for an anaesthetic leads him to ether and,

after his first experiments almost prove disastrous to one of his patients (William Demarest), he perfects its use. He becomes highly successful as a painless dentist, and offers his secret formula for purposes of surgery to a famous surgeon (Harry Carey), who, after testing it, acclaims it of great benefit to mankind. The Massachusetts Medical Society, however, biased against all dentists, refuse to permit their members to use the anaesthesia unless Morton's offer to furnish his anaesthesia to hospitals without charge, and despite his protests that the revelation of his formula would hurt his practice. But rather than have the sick suffer unduly, Morton reveals the formula and sacrifices his hope for personal gain.

The cast includes Julian Tannen, Franklin Pangborn, Louis Heydt and others. Suitable for all.

"I Love a Soldier" with Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 106 min.)

Mark Sandrich, one of the top-notch producers at the Paramount Studios, engaged Allan Scott, a writer with a fine reputation in Hollywood, to write a story for Paulette Goddard, but even though the picture may draw because of Miss Goddard's popularity, one cannot say that Sandrich has produced an outstanding picture, in spite of the fact that it has human interest as well as comedy situations. The trouble with it is the fact that the story "wanders all over the lot"; the action is interesting in most situations but hardly any of it is outstanding. The main plot revolves around a heroine who, though she is nice to every soldier as well as sailor she meets, is determined not to fall in love with any of them, no matter how "crazy" he might be over her, because of her fear that, if she did fall in love and marry him, he might never return. Around this plot, there are several by-plots. There is, for example, the plot of one of her pals, who had married a soldier, and a few months later learns that he was "missing in action." Later this soldier-husband returns to her, but blind. Though the sight of the reunion will bring tears to one's eyes, first because of the fact that she had given birth to a son, and secondly because of her loyalty to him—of her determination to stand by him regardless of his affliction, it may prove harrowing to millions of picture-goers, who have some one fighting at one of the many war fronts.

Paulette Goddard is presented as a shipyard welder, living with three girl-pals, one of whom had married a soldier. Paulette would meet soldiers and sailors and entertain them, but, even though some of them fall in love with her and offer to marry her, she turns down their proposals. One day Sonny Tufts and his pal, Walter Sands, return from the South Pacific and bring her a memento from a soldier whom she had met months previously, but who had been killed in action. But she does not remember the chap until she searches for and finds his photograph. When Tufts remarks that it is peculiar for a girl not to remember the man who loved her, Paulette explains her reasons to him. Tufts falls in love with her and asks her to marry him. She turns him down several times until he loses hope. But when Beulah Bondi, whom she had met previously, pleads with her not to make the mistake she had made during the first World War, when, prompted by the same fears as those of Paulette, she had refused to marry the man she loved, Paulette relents.

Mark Sandrich produced and directed it. The cast includes Marie MacDonald, Barry Fitzgerald, Frank Albertson, James Bell and others. Unobjectionable morally.

"Take it Big" with Jack Haley, Harriet Hilliard and Richard Lane

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 74 min.)

Just a moderately entertaining comedy with music, best suited for the lower-half of a double bill. The story, which has its setting in a dude ranch, is extremely light and manages to be fairly amusing at times, but for the most part the comedy situations fall flat, despite the players' earnest efforts. Even the musical end of the picture is quite ordinary, with the exception of the singing by Frank Forest, who sings the "Figaro" number from the "Barber of Seville." Ozzie Nelson and his orchestra furnish the music:—

Jack Haley, a night club performer, learns that his uncle had died, leaving him heir to the A-Bar-B ranch in Nevada. Together with Harriet Hilliard and Richard Lane, his night club pals, Haley heads west and, by mistake, takes possession of the B-Bar-A, a swanky dude ranch, owned by Frank Forest, who was away at the time. Giddy with his new found prosperity, Haley invites to the ranch a host of show folk from the East. But before his guests can make themselves

comfortable, Haley learns that he owned the delapidated A-Bar-B ranch. Despondent at first, Haley and his friends decide to revamp the A-Bar-B into a dude ranch, in competition with the B-Bar-A. Forest, peeved at the success of the revamped ranch, buys up a \$15,000 mortgage that was outstanding on Haley's property, and threatens to foreclose unless Haley paid off within one week. Haley, desperate, enters his ranch in a rodeo contest, paying a \$1,500 entry fee in the hope of winning the \$15,000 prize money. The day of the contest finds the B-Bar-A and the A-Bar-B tied for first prize with one more event to go. Haley, in the excitement, falls off a fence into the saddle of a bucking broncho and wins the event and the prize money.

Howard J. Green wrote the screen play, William Pine and William Thomas produced it, and Frank McDonald directed it. The cast includes Mary Beth Hughes, Arline Judge, Fritz Feld, Lucille Gleason, Nils T. Granlund and others. Unobjectionable morally.

**"The Mask of Dimitrios" with
Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre
and Zachary Scott**

(Warner Bros., July 1; time, 95 min.)

An intriguing melodrama, but not so pleasant, by reason of the fact that none of the characters are sympathetic, nor do they do anything worthwhile. The story which revolves around the adventures of a mystery story writer who, in search of material for a new book, investigates the career of a notorious international criminal, has more talk than action, but it has been presented in an interesting way and holds the spectator's attention throughout. The action takes place in continental Europe, prior to the war, and the author's investigation leads him to strange lands and strange people, who, in a series of flashbacks, reveal the nefarious incidents in the life of the criminal, who is shown to have been a murderer, smuggler and spy. The closing scenes, where the author becomes involved in a scheme to blackmail the criminal, hold one in suspense:—

Peter Lorre, a timid Dutch author, learns from Kurt Katch, head of the Turkish Secret Police, that a stabbed body, identified as that of Zachary Scott, an international criminal, had been washed ashore on a beach at Instambul. Intrigued by Katch's story of the criminal's beginnings, Lorre determines to find out more about the dead man's character, intending to use the information as the basis for a new novel. As he travels from one country to another gathering information, Lorre meets up with Sydney Greenstreet, a mysterious Englishman, who tells him that he, too, was interested in Scott. Greenstreet, without explaining, grows excited when Lorre tells him that he had seen Scott's corpse. He asks Lorre to meet him in Paris on a specified date, assuring him that it will be to his financial advantage to do so. Lorre continues his travels and, on the appointed day, meets Greenstreet in Paris. There, the Englishman informs him that Scott was alive, head of a French banking firm, and that he had allowed the police to believe that his body had been found, in order that they stop searching for him. Greenstreet reveals also that, years previously, Scott had double-crossed him in a smuggling scheme. He induces Lorre to join him in a scheme to blackmail Scott. On the following day, Scott meets them and agrees to pay them 1,000,000 francs for their silence. Some hours later, however, Scott waylays the pair and, in the ensuing struggle, is shot dead by Greenstreet, who in turn is mortally wounded himself. Lorre, his life spared, hurries from the scene.

Frank Gruber wrote the screen play from a novel by Eric Ambler. Henry Blanke produced it, and Jean Negulesco directed it. The cast includes Faye Emerson, Victor Francen, Steve Geray, Florence Bates, Edward Ciannelli and others. Not for children.

**"Goodnight Sweetheart" with Ruth Terry
and Robert Livingston**

(Republic, June 17; time, 67 min.)

A satisfactory program comedy. Although the story revolves around a newspaperman who resorts to scandal tactics to increase the circulation of his paper, it is not offensive since it has been treated in a comedy vein. It should please audiences pretty well because of the amusing comedy situations, most of which are provoked by the complications the hero gets himself into when his schemes boomerang. The story is lacking in human appeal, since the characters do nothing to awaken sympathy. The performances are good:—

Robert Livingston, a big-city reporter, leaves his job to take over his half-interest in a small-town newspaper. He decides to use expose tactics to increase the paper's circula-

tion, and chooses as his target Judge Thurston Hall, the opposition paper's candidate for Mayor. Realizing that her uncle's past was unsullied, Ruth Terry, Hall's visiting niece, decides to teach Livingston a lesson. Hiding her identity, she leads him to believe that the Judge had jilted her and was trying to run her out of town. Livingston emblazons his paper with stories of the unnamed woman in Hall's life, intending to reveal the name at a later date. But before he can do this, Livingston learns that he had been the victim of a hoax. Determined to get even, Livingston disguises himself in feminine attire and rents a room in town. He telephones Henry Hull, his co-editor, and, identifying himself as "Marie Stevens," the real woman in Hall's life, makes an appointment to "tell all." He then disarranges the room and plants clues connecting Hall with "Marie." Disposing of the clothes in the river, Livingston returns to his office and accompanies Hull back to the room to keep the appointment with "Marie." His scheme works, and Hall is suspected of having kidnapped "Marie" to keep her quiet. The plan boomerangs, however, when witnesses reveal having seen Livingston dispose of feminine clothing in the river. Livingston finds himself accused of murdering "Marie," despite his protests that she was a fictitious character invented by himself. He is finally freed when Ruth, who loved and believed him, retrieves the clothes from the river and comes to his aid. Both are married by the Judge.

Isabel Dawn and Jack Townley wrote the screen play, Eddy White produced it, and Joseph Santley directed it. The cast includes Grant Withers, Lloyd Corrigan, Maude Eburn, Olin Howlin and others. Unobjectionable morally.

**"Christmas Holiday" with Deanna Durbin
and Gene Kelly**

(Universal, June 30; time, 93 min.)

This is a fairly interesting drama, well acted and directed. It is, however, a questionable box-office attraction, for it is doubtful if the picture will be recommended by those who will see it. The reason for it is the fact that they may be disappointed to see Deanna Durbin in a heavy dramatic role, one that is a complete departure from the type of role they enjoy seeing her play. Moreover, the story as a whole is a depressing entertainment; Deanna is presented as the victim of an unhappy marriage to a gambler, who was serving a life term for murder, and she is shown working as a hostess in a cheap New Orleans bistro, a life to which she had committed herself out of a belief that she had been responsible for having failed to guide her husband along a righteous path. Dramatically, the story is weak. Deanna, for example, carries an intense love for her husband, yet he had done nothing to earn her affection. Nor had she any logical reason to do penance in a bistro. As a matter of fact, it seems as if the story was designed for the sole purpose of casting Deanna in a tragic role, so that she would have an opportunity to display her acting talent. Only time will tell whether Universal has made a wise choice in selecting this type of role for one of its most valuable pieces of "property." Deanna's singing is confined to two popular tunes, which she sings solemnly in the night club. It should be noted that Deanna acts well, but her make up is most uncomplimentary. Gene Kelly, a rising star, does good work as the unscrupulous husband, but it is doubtful if such an unsympathetic role will add to his popularity. The story is told in a series of flashbacks:—

Befriended by Dean Harens, a young army lieutenant visiting the night club, Deanna relates to him the story of her unhappy marriage with Gene Kelly. She relates how she first met Kelly at a concert and, after a whirlwind courtship, married him. Despite his numerous promises to give up gambling, Kelly had continued the habit, and one day he had murdered a bookie. After he had been convicted and sentenced to prison, his mother (Gale Sondergaard) had accused Deanna of having failed to control her son's waywardness. Because of her deep love for Kelly, and because she felt partly responsible for his crime, Deanna had gone to work in the night club as a hostess, so that she, too, would suffer. Haren bids Deanna goodbye and prepares to leave town. But before his departure, he learns that Kelly had broken out of jail. Fearing for Deanna's safety, he returns to the night club. There, he finds Kelly accusing Deanna of being unfaithful to him, and threatening to shoot her. But the police, who had trailed Kelly, shoot him before he can harm her. He dies in Deanna's arms.

Herman J. Mankiewicz wrote the screen play from a novel by Somerset Maugham, Felix Jackson produced it, and Robert Siodmak directed it. Frank Shaw was the Associate Producer. The cast includes Richard Whorf, Gladys George and others. There are no objectionable sex situations.

"Henry Aldrich's Little Secret" with Jimmy Lydon and Charles Smith

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 74½ min.)

This latest of the "Aldrich" series is pretty entertaining, even though the story is light. It is a sort of farce comedy, with the action centered mostly around a baby. The attempts of the hero and his pal to hide the baby so as to prevent busybody representatives of a Welfare Society from taking him away from his mother is the cause of the comedy; and, for good measure, there is a court-room trial in which Henry's father, a lawyer and head of the Welfare Society, is pitted against his own son, who had undertaken to defend the case of the baby. There are also a few touches that will reach the heart-strings:—

Henry (Jimmy Lydon) and Dizzy (Charles Smith) start a baby-minding agency and, because the girl-students of their high school refuse to cooperate, the two boys carry on themselves. The first "minding" case is that of the baby of Mrs. Helen Martin (Ann Doran); her husband had been sent to jail on a trumped up charge, and the Welfare Society wanted to take the baby away from her as an unfit mother. Henry, when he learns the facts, persuades Mrs. Martin to go to Seattle where she expected to obtain evidence of her husband's innocence, promising to mind the baby while she is away. During her absence, Henry and Dizzy have a difficult time hiding the baby from the Welfare Society, but eventually have to give him up. At the trial, Henry, pitted against his own father (John Litel), delays the case with the sympathetic approval of the court until the mother appears with proof of her husband's innocence. The baby is returned to the mother, to the happiness of all, including Henry's father, with the exception of the busybody representatives of the society.

Aleen Leslie and Val Burton wrote the screen play, Michel Kraike produced it, and Hugh Bennett directed it. The cast includes Tina Thayer, Joan Mortimer, Olive Blake-ney and others.

Morally suitable for all.

"Secret Command" with Pat O'Brien, Carole Landis and Chester Morris

(Columbia, July 20; time, 80 min.)

A fairly good espionage melodrama, revolving around sabotage activities in an American shipyard. Although it offers little that is novel in the way of either story or treatment, it holds one's interest, for the action is fast and exciting, and it has comedy and heart interest. Pat O'Brien, who co-produced the picture in addition to playing the lead, is cast in a rough and tough, but sympathetic, role; the sort his fans like to see him play. Some of the melodramatics are incredible. As a matter of fact, some of O'Brien's heroics would do credit even to "superman," but it is the sort of stuff that should please the action fans and keep the youngsters on the edge of their seats:—

O'Brien, a government agent posing as a "washed up" correspondent, secures a job at the Seaboard Shipyards through Chester Morris, his brother and yard foreman, whom he had not seen in years. O'Brien's assignment was to track down a gang of Nazis who planned to sabotage the yard. To help O'Brien hide his identity, his superior assigns Carole Landis, another agent, to pose as his wife, and gives them two refugee children to complete the "family." Ruth Warwick, O'Brien's former sweetheart, now engaged to Morris, becomes interested in him once again, much to the annoyance of Carole, who would not admit her love for him. Through Wallace Ford, a fellow agent, who had fooled the Nazis into believing that he was one of them, O'Brien learns the identities of the spies, except for their chief. On the night the Nazis plan to blow up the yard, Ford meets with them and learns that Tom Tully, an affable fellow worker, was the Nazis' chief. He attempts to warn O'Brien by telephone, but he is discovered and shot. O'Brien, hearing the shot, hurries to the yards. Meanwhile the spies, headed for the yards, drive past O'Brien's home and shoot Barton MacLane, a ship worker, whom they mistake for O'Brien. The spies are apprehended by O'Brien as they enter the yards, but the unsuspected Tully gets through and plants a bomb on an aircraft carrier. Carole, warned about Tully by the wounded MacLane, rushes to the yards in time to notify O'Brien. In a desperate struggle, O'Brien kills Tully and stops the time-bomb. His mission completed, O'Brien heads for new adventures and asks Carole to wait for his return. Morris and Ruth announce their marriage.

Roy Chanslor wrote the screen play, Phil L. Ryan co-produced it with O'Brien, and Eddie Sutherland directed it. The cast includes Howard Freeman, Matt McHugh, Frank Sully and others.

"The Invisible Man's Revenge" with Jon Hall, Alan Curtis and Evelyn Ankers

(Universal, June 9; time, 77 min.)

A fairly good program melodrama. The story is just another variation of the fantastic "Invisible Man" theme, but it has been produced well and has enough novelty, excitement, and even comedy to satisfy melodrama-loving audiences. As in the other pictures of this type, trick photography is the main asset; the excitement and suspense are caused by the ability of the main character to make himself invisible, thus terrifying those he seeks to harm. Although the mechanical tricks may lack novelty to those who have seen any of the previous pictures, it is, nevertheless, effective:—

Escaping from a psychopathic institute, Jon Hall makes his way to the English estate of Lester Matthews and Gale Sondergaard, a titled couple, and demands that they turn over their entire estate to him on the basis of an agreement he had made with them years previously, when all three had discovered a diamond mine in Africa. They drug Hall, steal the agreement from him, and turn him out of the house. With the aid of Leon Errol, an unscrupulous Cockney, Hall tries to blackmail the couple, only to have the police set on his trail. He flees into the woods and finds refuge in the home of John Carradine, a scientist, who had discovered a formula that rendered human beings invisible. Seeking to avenge himself, Hall submits to Carradine's experiment. The experiment is successful, and Hall uses his invisibility to terrorize the titled couple. Infatuated with Evelyn Ankers, the couple's daughter, whom he hoped to marry, Hall returns to Carradine and demands that he make him visible again. But Carradine refuses since it means taking the blood from another human. Hall knocks the scientist unconscious and drains the blood from his body, fighting off Carradine's dog during the transfusion. Visible again, Hall compels Matthews to take him into the household as an old friend. Within a few days, however, Hall discovers to his horror that he is turning invisible. He lures Alan Curtis, Evelyn's fiancé, to the wine cellar, overcomes him, and prepares to drain his blood. But Carradine's dog, who had been searching for the man who had murdered his master, breaks in and kills Hall.

Bertram Millhauser wrote the screen play, and Ford Beebe produced and directed it.

A bit too horrifying for children.

"Ghost Catchers" with Olsen and Johnson, Gloria Jean and Martha O'Driscoll

(Universal, June 16; time, 69 min.)

Best described as a comedy-mystery-musical, this latest of the Olsen and Johnson pictures manages to be fairly amusing. It does not, however, rise above program quality. Like the previous pictures, this one depends for its laughs on the typical buffoonery of these two comedians, who run through their bag of nonsensical tricks with varying degrees of success. At times, they are quite funny, but for the most part their antics provoke no more than a grin. The musical sequences, which are dragged in by the ear, are fairly entertaining. They include "jitterbug" dancing, singing by Gloria Jean and Ella Mae Morse, and one song by Morton Downey, who appears in one short sequence.

The story, or what there is of one, revolves around the efforts of Olsen and Johnson to get rid of a ghost that supposedly haunted the home of their next door neighbor, Walter Catlett, a Southern colonel, who had leased the house in preparation for the Carnegie Hall debut of Gloria Jean and Martha O'Driscoll, his daughters. Believing that the house was haunted by its former owner, who thirty years previously had fallen out of a window during a gay party, Olsen and Johnson lure the ghost out by giving a gay party, and drive him out of the house by having the guests do a wild "jitterbug" dance. But when the wierd noises continue, and a couple of murders occur, the boys investigate further and discover that a band of crooks were trying to frighten the girls out of the house in order to gain possession of a vast secret wine cellar. There follows numerous slapstick situations in which the two comedians become mixed up in numerous brawls with the thieves. It ends with the capture of the thieves, and with the culmination of a romance between Martha and a band leader in Olsen and Johnson's night club.

Edmund T. Hartmann wrote the screen play and produced it, and Edward F. Cline directed it. The cast includes Leo Carrillo, Andy Devine, Lon Chaney, Kirby Grant, Henry Armetta and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

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Columbia's New Approach — "Elastic Thinking"

As most of you already know, Columbia has announced that its 1944-45 program will include 44 features, 4 action musicals, and 10 westerns.

In comparing this announcement with similar announcements made by the Columbia executives in previous years, I find that they have now changed their method of approach; that is, while they continue making glowing statements about their company's "constantly accruing records of proud accomplishment," and about the good will that exists between the exhibitors and Columbia, these executives have now stopped their previous practice of making definite promises. Perhaps they themselves have come to realize that the exhibitors consider their promises worthless.

Instead of following their usual policy of listing forthcoming productions together with the outstanding stars who will appear in them, they now list their story properties and roster of players under contract, and say that their "program for 1944-45 will be selected from such personalities and material as are hereby listed, or from additional material acquired and produced during the year." They then explain that "the presentation is made in this form at this time in order that the company may remain elastic in its thinking, may make such changes as it believes to be in the best interests of an improved program, and consequently, in the best interests of the theatres served."

These are fine words, but, on the basis of past performances, can Columbia be depended on to remain "elastic in its thinking . . . in the best interests of the theatres served"? Columbia furnishes the answer itself on the basis, not only of past performances, but also of its recently announced policy, the unfairness of which it is trying, in the opinion of this paper, to cloak with a product announcement written in dignified but deceptive phraseology.

The 1944-45 Announcement

Let us examine the 1944-45 announcement: One paragraph states that, in addition to its regular program, Columbia "will sell separate and apart from any program Sidney Buchman's Technicolor production (untitled) starring Paul Muni and Merle Oberon. . . ." This "untitled" production, as Columbia prefers to tag it, apparently out of a desire to keep it unidentifiable, is none other than "At Night We Dream," the Paul Muni picture that was promised to the 1943-44 contract-holders. Recently, the home office changed the title of this picture tentatively to "The Love of Madame Sand." Shooting of this picture was completed early in March and, as was said in the May 13 issue, Columbia remained silent about it. HARRISON'S REPORTS asked then: "Why is it being withheld?" The Columbia executives now give the answer by informing you that they will sell it in the 1944-45 season as a special, "separate and apart from any program."

In previous years Columbia had, for the most part, failed to deliver promised pictures because it had not produced them. The Paul Muni picture, however, is completed, and Columbia has no reason for withholding it from the 1943-44 program. Since Columbia refuses to deliver this picture as promised, and since it now informs those of you who bought it once that you will have to buy it again as a special and, undoubtedly, at higher terms, do its executives expect you to believe that it will be to your benefit to have Columbia remain "elastic in its thinking"?

By their action in the case of the Paul Muni picture, Columbia's executives prove that they certainly are "elastic" in their thinking.

Additional Proof of "Elastic Thinking"

And here is some more evidence of Columbia's "elastic thinking": Included in the list of properties from which Columbia intends to select its 1944-45 program is "Tonight and Every Night," starring Rita Hayworth. This picture, which is now in production, was promised to the 1943-44 contract-holders under the title of "Heart of a City." But the Columbia executives now bluntly tell you that they will not make delivery, thus adding to their "constantly accruing record of proud accomplishment."

Incidentally, the Rita Hayworth pictures seem to be Columbia's choicest bait in inducing exhibitors to sign for a season's product. On the 1942-43 program, four were promised but only one was delivered; on the 1943-44 program, three were promised, all in Technicolor, with one co-starring Cary Grant, but only one, "Cover Girl," will be delivered; in its 1944-45 program announcement, however, although it identifies "Tonight and Every Night" as a Rita Hayworth picture (it is the only production identified in the announcement), it does not make a promise of delivery; it merely lists the picture as one among the properties from which the 1944-45 program will be selected. Consequently, whether or not the picture will ever be delivered next season depends on how "elastic" the Columbia executives remain in their thinking.

Pictures Unidentifiable in Announcement

Among the other properties listed in the announcement, some appear to be pictures that were promised in the 1943-44 program but, because of the change of titles and the obviously cloaked manner in which the Columbia executives have chosen to describe them, I cannot identify them definitely. For example, the 1943-44 program listed "The Life of Al Jolson" as a "musical presenting the life story of the greatest entertainment figure Broadway has ever known." The 1944-45 announcement lists "April Showers" as a "light-hearted biography of a noted musical comedy figure. . . ." Al Jolson and April Showers are as closely identified as are ham and

(Continued on last page)

"Louisiana Hayride" with Judy Canova

(Columbia, July 13; time, 69 min.)

Just a mediocre slapstick comedy, modestly produced; it rates no better than the lower-half of a mid-week double bill in small-town and neighborhood theatres. Judy Canova's ardent fans may find something to laugh at here and there, but others should find it considerably boring, for the story is exasperatingly inane, and the comedy situations are weak and forced. The tediousness of the proceedings is occasionally relieved by Judy's singing, but even this adds little to the picture's entertainment value. No fault can be found with the players; it is just that the direction and the material didn't give them half a chance:—

Judy Canova, a "hillbilly" girl, finds herself very wealthy when an oil company takes an option on her farm. Richard Lane and George McKay, "confidence" men, meet Judy on a train and, learning of her wealth, plot to fleece her. They sell to her stock in a non-existent motion picture company, promising to star her in a picture. The two crooks go to Hollywood, where they spend the money freely and soon find themselves broke. Judy, accompanied by her mother and brother, follows the crooks and, to their amazement, offers to invest more money. They arrange with her to invest \$3,000 weekly, and engage Ross Hunter, a bellboy, to pose as the director of the picture. Hunter double-crosses the crooks by renting studio space to "shoot" the picture, compelling them to pay the charges out of the money they had mulcted from Judy. Meanwhile Judy goes to the wrong studio where a director of another picture mistakes her for a singer he had been expecting from the casting office. She sings a song and creates a great impression. Judy finally gets to work on her own picture and, when it is nearly finished, learns that the story was stolen from a Broadway stage play. To add to Judy's troubles, the police arrest Lane and McKay for previous swindles, and a telegram arrives informing her that the oil company had cancelled its option on her farm. Judy is heartbroken, but it all turns out for the best when Hobart Cavanaugh, a timid Broadway producer who had been courting her mother, reveals that he owns the stage play and gives Judy the motion picture rights as a present.

Paul Yawitz wrote the screen play and Charles Barton directed it. The cast includes Lloyd Bridges, Matt Willis, Minerva Urecal and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Secrets of Scotland Yard" with Edgar Barrier and Stephanie Bachelor

(Republic, July 26; time, 68 min.)

A fairly interesting spy melodrama with a mystery angle; it should get by with audiences that are not concerned too much about either the plausibility of a plot or the fact that the author ties in the different happenings in an arbitrary manner. The story, which revolves around the efforts of the British Admiralty to uncover the identity of a Nazi spy—one of six persons employed in its decoding room—holds one intrigued most of the way, but towards the finish it peters out; there the identity of the spy becomes quite obvious and the author resorts to convenient devices to unravel the mystery. As in most pictures of this type, the different characters commit suspicious acts to add to the intrigue. There is some romantic interest, but it is of no importance:—

With the end of World War I, in 1918, the German High Command blames its defeat on the efficiency of the British Admiralty's decoding division, which intercepted and decoded German wireless messages. The Command determines to train a spy to join that division in preparation for the next war. In 1939, at the start of World War II, the Admiralty's most expert decoder (Edgar Barrier) is

murdered while working alone in the secret decoding room, to which only six persons had access. C. Aubrey Smith, head of the division, contacts the dead man's brother (also Edgar Barrier), a Scotland Yard Inspector. Confident that one of the five persons who had access to the room was a spy, Barrier decides to trap the killer by impersonating his brother; he felt that since no one but Smith and the murdered knew of his brother's death, the guilty person would surely reveal himself. Even Stephanie Bachelor, the dead man's fiancée and co-worker, is kept ignorant of his death. When the others employed in the room fail to indicate that they had recognized his deception, Barrier conducts a systematic investigation and uncovers evidence that leads him to suspect each one of them, including Stephanie. Meanwhile Smith is murdered mysteriously, and Lionel Atwill, one of the decoders, is appointed head of the division. In an attempt to blow up a plane carrying high-ranking British officers to Warsaw, the Nazis switch to a new wireless code. Barrier succeeds in decoding the message, but Atwill, who reveals himself as the spy, tries to prevent him from notifying headquarters. Barrier kills him by firing a gun concealed in his bandaged hand.

Denison Clift wrote the screen play, and George Blair produced and directed it. The cast includes Henry Stephenson, John Abbott, Walter Kingsford, Martin Kosleck, Bobby Cooper and others.

Morally unobjectionable.

"Silent Partner" with William Henry and Beverly Loyd

(Republic, June 9; time, 55 min.)

A mildly entertaining program murder mystery melodrama, brightened by occasional spurts of comedy. The story, which revolves around a crime reporter who seeks to clear himself of a murder charge, presents little that is new and, even though the identity of the murderer is kept concealed until the end, it fails to hold one in suspense, because the plot is muddled and illogical. It should, however, get by with audiences who do not resent illogical plots so long as the action is fast and fairly exciting:—

William Henry, an ace crime reporter, returns home one evening and finds John Harmon, an underworld character who often gave him valuable tips, murdered in his apartment. Beverly Loyd, a magazine writer, who had an appointment with Henry for an interview, arrives at the apartment and notices the body. Henry takes an address book from Harmon's pocket and promises Beverly a scoop on the story if she will give him a chance to solve the murder. She agrees, and takes Henry to her apartment to hide from the police. Knowing that Harmon intended to give him information about certain paintings that had been stolen from a local museum, Henry deduces that one of the five persons listed in the address book had murdered Harmon to keep him quiet. As he goes about his investigation, eluding the police, Henry finds himself constantly annoyed by Ray Walker, a drunkard, who conveniently helps him to escape harm at the hands of those he investigates, who all were part of a big crime ring. Subsequent happenings lead Henry to believe that both Beverly and the drunkard were part of the gang, and that they were trying to hamper his investigation as well as pin Harmon's murder on him. In the end, however, Henry learns that the head of the crime ring was none other than Grant Withers, his editor, and that Beverly and the drunkard were insurance company detectives, assigned to protect him.

Gertrude Walker wrote the screen play, and George Blair produced and directed it. The cast includes Joan Blair, Roland Drew, George Meeker and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Are These Our Parents?" with
Helen Vinson, Lyle Talbot
and Noel Neill**

(Monogram, July 15; time, 74 min.)

In view of the fact that much of the present juvenile delinquency is being blamed on irresponsible parents, "Are These Our Parents?" should do better than average business because its subject matter lends itself to exploitation, and because it is the first film dealing with this subject to reach the market. As entertainment, however, it is disappointing, for the story is trite and fails to strike a realistic note, the situations are forced, and the production is ordinary. Moreover, it is unpleasant, and it resorts to preachment to put over its morale. No sympathy can be felt for the heroine, for, even though her waywardness is the result of her mother's neglect, she does not display any fine traits. Consequently, her regeneration has little effect on one's emotions. On the whole the picture has all the ear marks of one that was produced in great haste, without care, aimed at "cashing in" on a timely subject:—

Bored with fashionable boarding schools, and angry because of her mother's disinterest in her, Noel Neill, a teen-aged youngster, visits a roadhouse, which is raided by Addison Richards, a juvenile officer. Noel escapes in a borrowed car that soon runs out of gas. Richard Byron, on his way home from work, rescues and drives her home. Annoyed because Noel's unexpected arrival interfered with her good times, Helen Vinson, Noel's mother, plans to send her away. Noel, however, insists upon remaining at home. Learning that Ivan Lebedeff, a night-club owner, had once been her mother's lover, Noel deliberately flirts with him to prove that she is grown up. Byron, who had fallen in love with Noel, becomes bitterly disappointed in her when he catches her sneaking into the night-club to visit Lebedeff. To add to Byron's disgust, his father (Anthony Warde) neglects his defense job for Robin Raymond, a woman of loose morals. Lebedeff is murdered under circumstances that lead the police to suspect Noel and Byron, and the youngsters go into hiding. Richards finally locates them and informs them that Lebedeff had been killed by a man whose daughter the night-club owner had wronged. The youngsters are welcomed home by their parents, who, after receiving an admonition from Richards, eagerly seek to right their own wrongs.

Michael Jacoby wrote the screen play, Jeffrey Bernerd produced it, and William Nigh directed it. The cast includes Emma Dunn, Emmet Vogan and others.

Because of the unpleasant sex situations, it is not suitable for children.

**"Return of the Ape Man" with Bela Lugosi
and John Carradine**

(Monogram, June 17; time, 61 min.)

This program horror melodrama should provide a field day for the avid followers of this type of entertainment; fairly intelligent audiences, however, may find the proceedings too ludicrous to hold their interest. Using stock characterizations of a mad scientist and of a hideous-looking man, called a prehistoric "ape-man," the story and treatment are a carbon copy of any number of similar melodramas, with the usual fantastic laboratory experiments "in the interests of science," and the inevitable murders that occur when the "ape-man" runs amok after having had an intelligent brain transplanted in his skull. The popularity of the leading players, noted for their work in this type of picture, may help to draw customers:—

Bela Lugosi, a scientist, and John Carradine, his assistant, discover a process whereby they can keep people frozen for an indefinite period of time, and then revive them. They

go to the Arctic, find a prehistoric "ape-man" preserved in ice, and bring him back to the laboratory. Revived, the "ape-man" attacks the two scientists, but they manage to imprison him by threatening him with fire. Lugosi decides to transfer the brain of an intelligent man to the "ape-man," and plans to use the brain of Michael Ames, fiancé of Carradine's niece (Judith Gibson). Carradine, however, frustrates the plan. Later, Lugosi murders Carradine and transfers his brain to the "ape-man." The monster begins to show signs of normal intelligence, but retains his lust to kill. He escapes and, under the guidance of Carradine's brain, kills Carradine's wife before Lugosi recaptures him. Meanwhile Ames and Judith trace Carradine to the laboratory, but Lugosi denies having seen him. The "ape-man" escapes again, kidnaps Judith, and carries her back to the laboratory, where he murders Lugosi. Trying to escape from the laboratory with Judith, the "ape-man" pulls loose some wiring and starts a fire. Ames, who had traced Judith to the laboratory, rescues her, and the "ape-man" is destroyed by the fire.

Robert Charles wrote the screen play, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and Phil Rosen directed it. Barney Sarecky was associate producer.

Too horrifying for children.

**"They Live in Fear" with Otto Kruger
and Clifford Severn**

(Columbia, June 15; time, 66 min.)

A feeble, slow-moving anti-Nazi melodrama, with a trite story, barely boding one's interest; it is not a picture that will appeal to many, for its theme has been done many times—and much better. Another drawback is the fact that no one in the cast means anything at the box-office. The story, which centers around the rehabilitation of a Nazi youth who escapes to America, lacks realism, and little imagination has gone into the treatment. Most of the action takes place in a typical American high school, and the antics of the students help to liven up an otherwise sombre theme. It does have human interest and the main characters are sympathetic, but it is not enough to overcome the tediousness of the production as a whole:—

Rebelling against his Nazi training when he is ordered to kill a political prisoner, Clifford Severn, a Hitler Youth, helps his intended victim to escape. The grateful man urges him to flee to America, and gives him a letter to Otto Kruger, principal of an American high school. In America, Severn becomes one of the school's most brilliant students. When Jimmy Carpenter, star of the football team, is informed that he will be kept out of the big game unless his school work improved, Pat Parish, Carpenter's girl-friend, persuades Severn to coach him. Though Severn helps Carpenter to pass his examinations, the football player dislikes the German boy because of Pat's interest in him. When the school stages a big campaign to raise money for a blood bank, Severn agrees to make an anti-Nazi speech. Carpenter, disguising his voice, telephones Severn and warns him not to make any anti-Nazi statements lest his family in Germany suffer reprisals. Disturbed, Severn goes on the platform and speaks in justification of the Nazis. He is threatened and booed off the stage. Kruger and Pat, confident that Severn was under a strain, quiet the students and ask them to remain in their seats. Meanwhile Carpenter realizes the harm he had done to Severn, and confesses. Severn is brought back to the stage and, after he tells the students what he really thinks of the Nazis, they voice their faith in him.

Michael L. Simmons and Sam Ornitz wrote the screen play, Jack Fier produced it, and Josef Berne directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

eggs. I leave it to you to determine whether or not this is the same production.

The fact that the Columbia executives have quit making definite promises is, in the opinion of HARRISON'S REPORTS, an indication that their salesmen are meeting with determined exhibitor resistance as a result of their continued failure to keep most of their promises. Their new approach should not be taken as a sign that they intend to turn over a new leaf, for the withholding of both the Paul Muni and the Rita Hayworth pictures is proof that their tactics remain the same.

Let you receive the impression that Columbia's broken 1943-44 promises are confined to the aforementioned two pictures, let me again call your attention to some of this company's other promised pictures, the potential box-office value of which induced many an exhibitor to sign a contract. These customers cannot now hope to receive these pictures, for at this late date Columbia has not yet put them into production and, even if it should start them within a short time, it is doubtful if they can be completed in time for delivery this season. Among these pictures are, as said before, the following:

"Road to Yesterday," with Irene Dunne.

"Gone are the Days," with Rita Hayworth and Cary Grant, in Technicolor.

"The First Woman Doctor," with Olivia De Havilland.

"The Life of Al Jolson."

"Knights Without Armor."

These five pictures, added to the Paul Muni and Rita Hayworth pictures already mentioned, make a total of seven important pictures that the Columbia executives will fail to deliver on the 1943-44 program in accordance with their promise. And don't be surprised if, to these seven, an eighth is added: I am referring to "The Impatient Years," starring Jean Arthur, the shooting of which was completed early in May. Since Columbia has set its release schedule up to August 3rd, leaving a little more than three weeks' time before the close of the season, the release of this picture on the 1943-44 program depends on how "elastic" the Columbia executives remain in their thinking.

HARRISON'S REPORTS doubts whether "The Impatient Years" will be delivered as promised, but, for the sake of the exhibitors, it hopes that it will be proved wrong.

Purpose of Columbia's "Elastic Thinking"

In the opinion of this paper, Columbia's new method of approach has a two-fold purpose: first, by refusing to make definite promises it avoids the necessity of breaking them, thus halting criticism in case of violations; and, secondly, by making no promises, the Columbia executives will have greater leeway to juggle their releases and their sales policy in a manner that will suit best their own interests.

A good example of what might happen is this: Should one of their pictures turn out to be a phenomenal success, the Columbia executives will have the right to sell it as a special instead of allocating it to one of the program's brackets. And the exhibitor would have not even the slightest right to protest. Had the 1943-44 program been sold on the basis of no definite promises, do you suppose that the Columbia executives would have allocated "Cover Girl" to the program? Just read again Rube Jackter's letter to his sales force, which was reproduced in the May 13 issue of this paper, and you will get the answer.

Columbia's "proud record of accomplishment" speaks for itself. Yet the Columbia executives are bold enough to ask you to buy their coming season's product on the basis of faith in their good judgment and business integrity.

There is only one way by which you can hope to obtain fair treatment from Columbia—insist that the contract identify the pictures you buy. Only then will you have any rights in the event that the Columbia executives should become a bit too "elastic" in their thinking.

A FRANKENSTEIN HAS BEEN CREATED

The trade papers report the sale of "Junior Miss" to Warner Brothers for \$450,000.

I remember the day when \$100,000 for a stage play was considered an extraordinary price, but today the price of \$450,000 is considered ordinary. The authors of the play "Life with Father" are asking anywhere from \$500,000 to \$800,000 in addition to participation in the profits as well as to the approval of the script.

Is there a play worth that much money?

The ratio of successful pictures based on high-priced stage plays is not much higher than the ratio of either novels or original stories. That is what experience has proved.

It is my opinion that the producers are creating a Frankenstein, which they will be unable to get rid of when times become lean; during such times, the stage play authors, having been accustomed to receiving high prices for their plays, will continue to demand such prices, being unwilling to moderate their demands in accordance with the new level of receipts. It is then that the producers will realize how much harm they have done by their overbidding one another now for the choice stage plays.

HARRISON'S REPORTS does not, of course, believe that the advice it now gives to the producers on this subject will have any effect on them; but it does hope that it will warn the exhibitors to avoid "falling" for the producer-distributor propaganda designed to make them believe that, because a high price has been paid for the right to a book or play, the picture cannot help turning out great. I have seen so many expensive novels as well as stage plays make a failure on the screen that it behooves every exhibitor to wait until the expensive-play pictures are finished and shown, before stepping on one another's feet in their mad rush to the exchanges to buy the picture.

A DECISION TO PREVENT A CONFLICT IN TRADE SCREENINGS

Recently HARRISON'S REPORTS exposed the intolerable conditions that existed in the trade screenings. As a result of this expose, the general sales managers of the five consenting companies held a meeting and adopted a "master" clearance plan by which their companies' trade showings would not conflict with one another in any exchange center. Under the plan, Glen Allvine, secretary of the MPPDA Public Information Committee, will be consulted by the five companies so that conflicts in screening times may be avoided.

In commenting about the matter, the trade papers reported that the move came about as a result of complaints from exhibitors, "climaxed by 22 conflicts in the screenings of three companies in the first week of this month."

HARRISON'S REPORTS challenges the accuracy of this report. Though there have been complaints by exhibitors individually, no doubt in every zone, these had never become vocal and were ineffective, because they could not be presented together to make an impression. The decision of the five companies to do something about this evil was the result of an editorial that appeared in the March 25 issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS, under the heading, "Abusive Tactics in Trade Screenings." The writer, knowing that Mr. Allvine had been empowered to prevent trade screening conflicts in New York City as it concerned national magazine and newspaper reviewers, inquired of him whether anything could be done to adopt the same system in national trade screenings. Mr. Allvine informed me that he was to meet with representatives of the five companies on the following day and that he would be glad to take the matter up with them and press them for the adoption of a system that would prevent such conflicts.

HARRISON'S REPORTS feels glad that it has been of service to the exhibitors in helping to eliminate this abuse.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1944

No. 26

**FORTHCOMING ARTICLES ON
TELEVISION**

Beginning with the issue of July 8, there will appear in this publication either two or three weekly articles on television. These will, I believe, prove of interest, not only to the exhibitors, but also to the distributors—as a matter of fact, to the entire industry. The exhibitors should be interested particularly because lately there have been published, not only in the trade papers, but also in the newspapers of the nation, television accounts that have caused them considerable concern.

The facts that have enabled me to write these articles have been furnished by one of the world's foremost authorities on the subject.

In these articles there will be discussed the possible cost of the instrument, of its installation in the theatre, of the television-instrument operators, of the entertainment that will be furnished to the theatre over the wires, and of other related matters. The discussion of these problems should enable an exhibitor to determine whether or not it will be profitable, and possible, for him to have a television instrument installed in his theatre and, if not, what will likely happen to his business in the event that his competitor did install one.

With the advent of sound in 1928, the writer went to the same authority for information and, as a result of the facts he had furnished me, I was enabled to write a series of articles that proved of great interest to the entire industry. It was the first time that anything had been written on the subject and only a limited number of persons knew anything about it—how sound was generated, how it was transferred on either disc or film, why the sound on film was preferable to the sound on disc despite the determination of two film companies (Warner Bros. and Famous-Players Lasky) to hang on to the disc sound, and which of the two film-recording systems, the variable density or the variable width, was the better. Companies that hung on to the variable density system with the fanaticism of Dervishes, despite clarification of the two systems in those articles, are now using the variable width system, developed by RCA Photophone. One of the companies that had contracted for the variable density system had taken those articles to heart and, after a thorough study of them, decided to obtain a license for the variable width system when its contract with the variable density sound company expired. Since then, other companies have obtained licenses to use the better system. Those articles, then, contained information that proved valuable, not only for the exhibitors, but also for the producers and the distributors.

In regards to television, I may say that articles regarding this invention were published in these columns twice before, in 1930 and in 1938. In the series that was published beginning the issue of June 14, 1930, under the heading, "Television—An Enemy or a Friend," there was explained what television is and how it operates; in the series that began December 10, 1938, an attempt was made to make the place of television in the picture theatre clear so as to remove the anxiety that many exhibitors felt from this new form of competitive entertainment.

But the art of television has advanced since then, and what was said in those two series of articles does not quite apply to the present development of television. Hence this new series.

I feel grateful towards this scientist for his unselfishness in furnishing me with these facts, from which, I am sure, the entire industry, particularly the exhibitors, will benefit.

**MORE ABOUT MULTI-MILLION
DOLLAR PRODUCTIONS**

I have written so often about high-costing pictures necessitating an advance in the prices of admission, not only in first-run, but also in all subsequent-run theatres that, at first glance, it might seem superfluous to dwell on the subject again; but one can write about it every week and yet not exhaust the subject.

The theory behind the curtailing of the number of pictures each company has been producing is to spend more money on each of the reduced number of pictures and have the exhibitors play them longer on the theory that the better the picture the longer it plays, and the more revenue the distribution department gets. But things have not worked that way, for the simple reason that the producers now get their proportion of "flops" just as they got them when they were producing a greater number of pictures.

So it isn't the money a company spends on a picture that determines the picture's box-office worth; we have seen so many expensive productions, pictures costing anywhere from one and one-half to three million dollars, "flop" at the box-office that a repetition of the statement is hardly necessary. It is first and foremost the quality of the story that determines a picture's worth. With a good story to start with a studio may build up a picture's drawing power by means of a unit producer who understands dramatic values, a director who knows his business, popular players in the leads, and a competent supporting cast—and, of course, a good title.

We don't have to wait until the war ends before finding out that multi-million dollar pictures can "flop"; we see them "flopping" now.

"Gildersleeve's Ghost" with Harold Peary

(RKO, no release date set; time, 64 min.)

This latest in the series of "Gildersleeve" pictures is an amusing slapstick program comedy, the sort that should provoke hearty laughter in crowded theatres, in spite of the fact that the story is silly to the extreme. This time "Gildersleeve," played by Harold Peary, becomes involved with two mad scientists, a gorilla, and a beautiful blonde, who makes herself invisible at will. The comedy results from the many farcical situations "Gildersleeve" gets himself into in an effort to prove to his doubting friends that the gorilla and the disappearing woman did exist, while the scientists, to hide their secret, intimate that he was suffering from hallucinations. Trick photography has been employed to good effect:—

Learning that Gildersleeve sought election as police commissioner of Summerfield, and realizing that he would have a hard time winning over Emory Parnell, the incumbent commissioner, two of Gildersleeve's ancestral ghosts (both played by Peary) decide to aid him. They go to the home of the two mad scientists, who were experimenting with a drug that made people invisible, and who were using as subjects a gorilla and a beautiful woman (Marion Martin). The ghosts, planning to have Gildersleeve discover the scheme so that he may become a hero and win the election, release the gorilla and lead it to Gildersleeve's home. After an encounter with the gorilla, Gildersleeve demands that Parnell, his political opponent, capture the animal, Parnell scoffs at his story and labels it a cheap publicity stunt. Gildersleeve trails the animal back to the scientists' home, where he has some weird adventures with both the gorilla and the disappearing woman. Parnell, accompanied by Gildersleeve's family, comes to the house and, despite Gildersleeve's claims to the contrary, is told by the scientists that nothing was wrong; they intimate that Gildersleeve was losing his mind. A storm compels every one to remain in the house overnight. All through the night, Gildersleeve prowls about and gets himself into all sorts of difficulties trying to capture the gorilla and the invisible woman to prove his statements correct. He finally succeeds and, having become a town hero, looks forward to winning the election.

Robert H. Kent wrote the screen play, Herman Schlom produced it, and Gordon Douglas directed it. The cast includes Richard LeGrand, Amelita Ward, Freddie Mercer, Margie Stewart and others.

Suitable for all.

"The Port of Forty Thieves" with Stephanie Bachelor and Richard Powers

(Republic, Aug. 13; time, 58 min.)

A fairly interesting, though lurid, program murder melodrama; it should go over with the followers of this type of entertainment, because it stresses the machinations of a luxury-loving murderous woman. Even though the spectator knows from the beginning that she is a murderess, his interest is attracted by the manner in which she tries to capitalize on the crime, as well as in her attempts on the lives of those who learn her secret. For good measure, she indulges in a bit of blackmail. The title is misleading in that it has no relation to the plot other than the fact that the murdered man, an author, had written a book with that title:—

Seven years after her husband's mysterious disappearance, Stephanie Bachelor retains Richard Powers, an attorney, to prove that the missing man was legally dead to enable her to take title to his estate. A few days later, a check signed by the missing man turns up at his bank. Stephanie, shocked, confides to George Meeker, her play-boy fiance, that her husband could not have signed the check because she had killed him. Unnerved by other incidents indicating that her husband was alive, Stephanie decides to flee to Mexico. Needing money, however, she demands \$50,000 from Russell Hicks, a broker, whom she had been black-

mailing ever since she persuaded her husband to omit his name from a Wall Street expose. She murders Meeker to make sure that he will never reveal her secret. Meanwhile Powers traces the check to a hotel and learns that it was put in the cash box by Lynn Roberts, a clerk. Lynn reveals to him that Stephanie's husband was her father by an earlier marriage, and claims that Stephanie had murdered him. Powers refuses to accept Lynn's charge unless she furnishes him with conclusive proof. Lynn determines to do so. Powers confronts Stephanie, but she denies knowing Lynn, and calls her story fantastic. Stephanie plans to murder Powers, but the arrival of Hicks with the \$50,000 interferes with her plan. After leaving the apartment with Powers, Hicks accuses him of engineering the blackmail. Powers, offended, insists that they return to Stephanie's apartment. There they find Stephanie threatening to shoot Lynn, who had come in search of proof of her father's murder. Overpowered, Stephanie readily confesses her crimes.

Dane Lussier wrote the screen play, Walter H. Goetz produced it, and John English directed it. The cast includes Olive Blakeney and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Youth Runs Wild" with Bonita Granville, Kent Smith, and Jean Brooks

(RKO, no release date set; time, 68 min.)

"Youth Runs Wild" is another in the inevitable cycle of pictures dealing with juvenile delinquency and with irresponsible parents. As entertainment, it is only mild program fare. Although some human interest is awakened by the sympathy one feels for the teen-aged hero and heroine, it fails to hold one's attention because of the lack of either an absorbing or realistic plot. Moreover, the pace is too slow. The picture's message is that the real fault for the present wave of juvenile delinquency lies, not with the children, but with the parents, who are too absorbed with their own interests to pay much attention to their off-spring. But this message is put over, not naturally, but by preachment:—

Fifteen-year-old Glenn Vernon becomes restless when his parents, defense workers, insist that he remain in school instead of letting him obtain a job so that he could earn money to spend on Tessa Brind, his girl-friend. Tessa, whose parents, too, were defense workers, was unhappy because they were selfish and addicted to good times while they compelled her to take care of the household. Resenting his lack of funds, and irritated at seeing Tessa become friendly with Bonita Granville, a disreputable young woman, and Lawrence Tierney, Bonita's racketeer boy-friend, young Vernon joins two older boys in a tire stealing expedition. The boys are caught and taken to juvenile court. All are placed in the custody of Kent Smith, Vernon's brother-in-law, who had just returned from overseas, wounded. Smith and Jean Brooks, his wife and Vernon's sister, talk Vernon into giving up Tessa, so that he would commit no wrong in an effort to earn money to take her out. Tessa, fed up with her drudgery at home, and heart-broken because Vernon had left her, leaves home and goes to live with Bonita. She secures employment in a road house where Bonita entertained customers. Learning of Tessa's new life, Vernon goes to the road house and tries to induce her to return home. She refuses to listen to him and asks the proprietor to eject him. Peeved, Vernon returns with two of his friends and, in the ensuing struggle, Bonita is fatally injured. Once again Vernon finds himself in juvenile court. The judge has no alternative but to send him to a reformatory. Tessa promises to wait for him, and joins Smith and Jean in a plan to combat juvenile delinquency in their town.

John Fante wrote the screen play, Val Lewton produced it, and Mark Robson directed it. The cast includes Elizabeth Russell, Dickie Moore and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Call of the Jungle" with Ann Corio and James Bush

(Monogram, July 1; time, 60 min.)

Mediocre program fare. It will have to depend on the exploitation value of Ann Corio, for, other than the fact that she appears in a sarong, there is little entertainment value in the picture—that is, if Ann Corio in a sarong can be considered entertainment value. As a matter of fact, the picture appears to be no more than an excuse for her to wear a sarong, for the story is a trite and far-fetched tale about hidden pearls stolen from a native shrine. The usual mythical South Sea isle serves as the background. The treatment of the story is most unimaginative, and talk replaces action. The performances are amateurish, and the production values extremely modest:—

When the sacred pearls of the South Sea island of Ta 'Pu are stolen, and Phil Van Zandt, dealer in stolen pearls, is found murdered, circumstantial evidence leads James Bush, the island's police officer, to believe that John Davidson, a local trader, was responsible for the crimes. Ann Corio, a white girl raised by the natives, believes Davidson to be innocent; she determines to clear him and to prevent the natives from committing mass murder on the island's whites, among whom were Muni Serrof, an inn-keeper; Claudia Dell, Serrof's girl-friend; and Edward Chandler and Stanford Jolly, two unscrupulous pearl fishermen, who had stolen the pearls and had sold them to Zandt. The person who had murdered Zandt had possession of the pearls. Convinced by Ann of Davidson's innocence, Bush finds evidence indicating that the two fishermen were the guilty persons. J. Alex Havier, a native boy in love with Ann, is murdered as he begins to reveal information about the crimes. Conspiring with Ann, Bush hits upon a plan to expose the guilty person. He brings the whites together at a native ceremony, and tells them that the guilty one would be exposed through witchcraft. The ruse causes the inn-keeper to confess, but, before being placed under arrest, he kills himself. With the sacred pearls restored to the natives, Bush and Ann look forward to a happy future on the island.

George Callahan wrote the screen play, Philip N. Krasne and James J. Burkett produced it, and Phil Rosen directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Step Lively" with Frank Sinatra, George Murphy, Adolphe Menjou and Gloria De Haven

(RKO, no release date set; time, 89 min.)

A fair comedy, with music. Its box-office possibilities can best be judged by the exhibitor himself, depending on how much Frank Sinatra means to his patrons. As compared with "Higher and Higher," the first Sinatra picture, this one has less music and, on the whole, is not as entertaining. The picture is a remake of "Room Service," which RKO produced in 1938 with the Marx Brothers and, except for Frank Sinatra's singing, practically no changes have been made in the plot, which revolves around the machinations of a shoe-string theatrical producer and his friends, who live by their wits in a fashionable hotel so as to put up a front for the purpose of impressing some potential backer. A good part of the comedy is slapstick, but the pace is fast; it should go over with non-discriminating audiences and, of course, with Sinatra's admirers, who for some unfathomable reason are stirred emotionally by as unromantic a figure as has ever been brought to the screen:—

George Murphy, a fast-talking Broadway producer searching for a backer, maintains himself and his company in a fashionable hotel managed by Walter Slezak, his brother-in-law, who worries lest Adolphe Menjou, the hotel's auditor, learn of Murphy's huge bill. In the midst of Murphy's negotiating a deal with Eugene Pallette, Frank Sinatra, a young playwright, arrives and demands to know

what Murphy had done with a play he had sent him together with \$1,500 to produce it. Murphy enlists the aid of Gloria DeHaven, his girl-friend, to stall Sinatra so that he (Murphy) would have time to conclude a \$50,000 deal with Pallette. Matters become complicated when Menjou barges in and accuses Murphy of being a faker. Pallette, alarmed, tries to get away, but Murphy and his aides get the check from him before they let him go. The check, drawn on a California bank, reestablishes Murphy's credit with Menjou, who permits him to draw on it until it clears. Murphy is elated, but Gloria soon deflates him by informing him that Pallette had stopped payment on the check. Realizing that it would be at least five days before Menjou learned of the stoppage, Murphy hastens to open the show within that time, charging all bills to the hotel. Meanwhile Sinatra, in love with Gloria, and disappointed because she was involved in Murphy's "phoney" deals, goes back home. Murphy telegraphs him absolving Gloria and requests that he return to sing in the show. Sinatra arrives on the opening night just as Menjou learns of the dishonored check. Menjou threatens to close the show. To stall Menjou, Sinatra pretends to swallow poison and feigns death. Murphy blames Menjou for driving Sinatra to the grave, and takes advantage of his remorseful mood to get the show started. By the time Menjou discovers the ruse, the show is a hit, assuring payment to Murphy's creditors.

Warren Duff and Peter Milne wrote the screen play, Robert Fellows produced it, and Tim Whelan directed it. The cast includes Wally Brown, Alan Carney, Grant Mitchell and Anne Jeffreys.

Suitable for all.

"Marine Raiders" with Pat O'Brien, Robert Ryan and Ruth Hussey

(RKO, no release date set; time, 95 min.)

A fairly good war melodrama. Although not very different in story content from other pictures of this type, it should please an average audience, for the main characters are sympathetic, the battle scenes thrilling, and the romantic interest is of the sort that should appeal to women, most of whom have a loved one on a fighting front. There is also a fair share of comedy. In view of the fact that war pictures have become a selling problem, unless they present something unusual, it should be said that "Marine Raiders" offers little that has not been done many times. Consequently, its reception at the box-office will depend on whether or not your patrons are surfeited with this type of entertainment. It is a well produced picture:—

After heroically helping to clear the Japanese of Guadalcanal, Major Pat O'Brien and Paramarine Robert Ryan are sent to Australia to await further orders. There, Ryan meets Ruth Hussey, officer in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force. They fall in love and, after a twenty-four hour courtship, decide to marry. Their plans are upset, however, when Ryan is wounded in an air raid, and Ruth is ordered on a tour of duty. O'Brien, lest his friend regret a hasty marriage, leaves orders for Ryan to be transferred to a hospital ship and sent back to the United States. Ryan becomes bitter towards O'Brien for having interfered in his personal affairs. In San Diego, both men are assigned to train new recruits. On the eve of sailing overseas with his new outfit, O'Brien learns that Ryan was to be assigned to a desk job in Washington because of his nervous tension. He talks the commanding officer into allowing Ryan to accompany him overseas, explaining that he was responsible for Ryan's condition. Reaching Australia, Ryan marries Ruth. Ruth effects a reconciliation between both men before they ship out on a major land, sea and air offensive against Japanese-held territory, in which both distinguish themselves.

Warren Duff wrote the screen play, Robert Fellows produced it, and Harold Schuster directed it. The cast includes Frank McHugh, Barton MacLane and others.

Suitable for all.

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER'S ANNIVERSARY WEEK

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is celebrating its Twentieth Anniversary, for one week beginning June 22, during which time every theatre will play an MGM picture.

HARRISON'S REPORTS was one year old when the late Marcus Loew, one of the most beloved industry leaders, bought out Metro, which had been founded by Richard Rowland. Mr. Loew felt that, having developed one of the most important theatre circuits in the country, he ought to develop also a producing company.

The following year he acquired the rights to "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," and produced it into one of the biggest and best box-office productions of the year. Other successful pictures followed, including "Ben-Hur."

In 1924, the company acquired the Goldwyn Corporation, and in the same year, it made a deal with Louis B. Mayer for his studio. Thus was evolved the present name—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

It is hardly necessary for any one to dwell upon the progress the company made. It made some mistakes at first, no doubt, but today it stands out as an example of what sincerity and hard work can do.

HARRISON'S REPORTS wishes Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer continued success, for its success will bring success to the box offices of the theatres, not only in the United States, but also in every foreign country.

"Sensations of 1945" with Eleanor Powell and Dennis O'Keefe

(United Artists, June 30; time, 86 min.)

What might have easily been just another musical with an inconsequential story to tie in the different specialty acts has been turned into a highly satisfactory entertainment on account of the deft original touches with which producer-director Andrew Stone has endowed the production. Without stinting on the production value, Stone has given an intimate quality to the musical presentations, each of which has something that sets it apart from similar presentations. One musical sequence combines a dancing chorus with a number of vaudeville acts, including Indian club wingers; a daredevil tight-wire walker; a unicyclist; trained bears; roller skaters; and tumblers and teeter-board artists—all are exceptional. Another sequence, where the tight-wire walker does his act on a wire strung across the Royal Gorge in Colorado (aided, of course, by trick photography), is both comical and thrilling. The dance routines of Eleanor Powell and of the dancing ensemble are truly fascinating. One clever dance number has Miss Powell doing a rumba with a dancing horse—and the horse is really good. Added to all this is the tuneful "jive" music of Cab Calloway's and Woody Herman's orchestras; Sophie Tucker singing the type of songs that have made her famous; W. C. Fields in one of his typical skits; and Dorothy Donegan, a colored pianist, whose facial contortions and remarkable piano playing provide one of the outstanding bits in the picture. The story itself is light but pleasant, and it is acted engagingly by all the players:—

Eleanor Powell, a musical-comedy dancing star, succeeds in gaining columns of publicity when she fakes an attempt on her own life. Eugene Pallette, her press agent, gives her credit for the publicity stunt, but Dennis O'Keefe, Pallette's son, condemns her for it.

Delighted with Eleanor's flair for publicity, Pallette goes on vacation and leaves her in charge of his agency, much to the annoyance of his son. Eleanor puts her new ideas into effect immediately, starting with a circus idea in a night-club, which turns out to be highly successful, despite O'Keefe's warning that it would fail. Eleanor successfully completes a number of other publicity stunts, including one that lands her in jail for blocking traffic in Times Square with "jitter-bugs" dancing to the music of Cab Calloway's orchestra. O'Keefe finally admits her talent, and both eventually fall in love. To gain publicity for the opening of a "gay nineties" cub, Eleanor arranges for C. Aubrey Smith, an aged retired actor, to manage the club; her purpose was to induce Aubrey's many theatrical friends to appear in the show on opening night without cost to the club. O'Keefe, calling her methods unethical, breaks with her. Eleanor sees the error of her ways and arranges for Smith to receive a percentage of the club's profits. Weeks later, O'Keefe, who had joined the Army, is reconciled with Eleanor through the efforts of his father.

Dorothy Bennett and Andrew Stone wrote the screen play. The cast includes Mimi Forsythe, Lyle Talbot, Hubert Castle, The Christianis and others.

"The Amazing Mr. Forrest" with Edward Everett Horton, Jack Buchanan Otto Kruger

(PRC; Mar. 29; time, 69 min.)

A fairly entertaining British-made comedy melodrama, done in the same breezy style as "The Thin Man" pictures, in which the debonair detective is aided by his witty wife in the solving of the crime. It should get by as a supporting feature in most situations, in spite of the fact that some of the typical British humor misses fire insofar as American audiences are concerned. What the story lacks in plausibility it more than makes up for in witty dialogue and fast action, which at times descends to sheer slapstick for laughs. The picture is more marketable than most British productions, for the cast includes players who are well known to American audiences:—

On the first morning of his retirement as special investigator for an insurance company, Jack Buchanan learns that his firm's safe had been blown open and that precious jewels belonging to a European Prince (Walter Rilla) had been stolen. Despite the entreaties of Googie Withers, his wife, who had welcomed his retirement from dangerous work, Buchanan institutes a search for the thieves. He discovers that the robbery had been committed by a gang of thieves headed by Otto Kruger, with whom the Prince was in league. The Prince, confronted by Buchanan, confesses and explains that he sought to collect the insurance money to feed his starving people. He agrees to help Buchanan capture the gang. Jack LaRue, the gang's "trigger man," attempts to retrieve certain evidence Buchanan had found, but he is captured and jailed. Knowing that Kruger would be looking for some one to replace LaRue, Buchanan masquerades as an American gangster and succeeds in becoming one of the gang, which had its headquarters in a fashionable night-club. Kruger hits upon a plan to murder the Prince so that he could keep the jewels and the insurance money. But Buchanan, aided by Edward Everett Horton, his butler, Googie and the Prince, frustrates the plan and rounds up the gang.

Ralph Spence wrote the screen play, Jack Buchanan produced it, and Thornton Freeland directed it.

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Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1944

No. 27

**LET THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT
TAKE SOME ACTION!**

For several months I have been reading in the trade papers that agreement between the five consenting companies and the Department of Justice is about to be reached, and that the terms of the new Consent Decree would be announced; but it seems as if I shall be reading the same stuff for several years more.

Either the government is right, in which case it should lay down the law on the distributors, or it is wrong, in which case it should drop the suit. If it is right, and the distributors do not want to abide by its recommendations, then it should proceed with the suit.

Some exhibors feel that, if the Department of Justice should proceed with the suit, it may lose it. If it should lose it, it would be far worse for the exhibitors.

Personally, I feel that conditions cannot be worse for the independent exhibitors. If they should be, perhaps Congress will take up their cause, and pass legislation that will protect their rights. It has been done in other countries, why can't it be done here?

LEST WE FORGET!

Since every one in the industry is celebrating for something, HARRISON'S REPORTS might as well join the parade and celebrate its Silver Anniversary, for with this issue it becomes twenty-five years old.

The first issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS carries the date of July 5, 1919.

Many of the first year's subscribers still continue to renew their subscriptions.

When I announced that I would never accept advertising, many exhibitors were sceptical; they felt that, after several years, I, too, would fall in line. But I have kept my word.

Looking back now I would say that, if I were to start now I would do no differently, for though advertising would bring in more income it would bring in also grief, and, weighing the additional profits as against the peace of mind that I have had, my original decision was the wisest that I could have taken.

I believe that it is in line for me to thank every one who has contributed to the success of HARRISON'S REPORTS, and to assure him that the policy of HARRISON'S REPORTS will remain to be just within human possibility.

**A TRIBUTE TO THE FATHER
OF THE WARNER BROTHERS**

A wire from my good friend Mort Blumenstock, East Coast advertising and publicity director of Warner Brothers, informed me that he was sending me a copy of a release, which the Permanente Metals Corporation, a Henry Kaiser subsidiary, was giving

out to the effect that its Richmond (California) yard was going to christen its latest and last Liberty ship in honor of Benjamin Warner, the father of Harry, Jack, Albert and the late Sam.

According to the latest information, the ship will be launched Saturday, July 1.

Though this is a tribute to the industry in general and to the Warner Brothers in particular, HARRISON'S REPORTS cannot pass up the opportunity of paying to the Warner brothers another tribute, lest we forget. Despite the mistakes their organization made in its relationship with exhibitors at the time they were practically the only company that had sound films and sound instruments, the industry cannot help being under an obligation to the Warner brothers for having had the courage to adopt sound and sound films when the other companies feared even to approach it.

The fact that the Warners brought sound into the industry at a time when the silent picture was dying makes the debt of gratitude that the industry owes them much greater, for no one who was in the picture business at that time now fails to realize that sound rescued the industry.

HARRISON'S REPORTS feels glad that Henry Kaiser has seen fit to honor the father of those who have played so great a part in the development of the motion picture industry.

**REMARKS INTENDED FOR
OUT-OF-TOWN THEATRES**

I read in a recent *Film Topics*, the bulletin that is published by the Independent Theatre Owners of Northern California, an account that would be unbelievable were it not for the standing of the writer, Mr. Rotus Harvey.

Mr. Harvey took a trip visiting many theatres in his territory,—theatres owned by Fox-West Coast, by independent circuits, and by individual exhibitors, and he found a similar condition existing in all three classes. Says Mr. Harvey:

"A couple of weeks ago, I saw a picture advertised in an Affiliated Theatre which I had missed and wanted to see. I went, plunked down my hard earned money to a non-smiling cashier, who did not even bother to say 'Thank You!' and walked into the theatre. A door boy took my ticket, tore it in half and I proceeded on my way. No one offered to show me a seat nor did anyone apparently notice me.

"Being a theatre man, I looked around and saw three usherettes grouped around the candy bar having a chin-fest. So I groped my way to a seat. I sat in the balcony so I could smoke and at no time did I see an usherette on duty. Kids ran around and made

(Continued on inside page)

PARTICIPATE IN FREE MOVIE DAY, JULY 6! SELL BONDS!

**"Three of a Kind" with Billy Gilbert,
Shemp Howard and Maxie Rosenbloom**
(Monogram, July 22; time, 67 min.)

A mildly entertaining program comedy-drama. It has a few laughs here and there provoked by the antics of Billy Gilbert and Shemp Howard but on the whole most of the comedy falls flat, for no matter how hard the players try, they cannot overcome the handicap of weak material. There is some human interest in the efforts of Gilbert and Howard to care for and adopt the young son of a dead vaudeville pal, but since both men are made to behave like "saps" throughout most of the action, one fails to be stirred emotionally by their dramatics:—

Gilbert and Howard, penniless vaudevillians, take care of Buzzy Henry, young son of a fellow actor, who had killed himself when he discovered that his wife (Helen Gilbert) had been unfaithful to him. Unable to find employment in vaudeville, the two men secure jobs as cooks in Maxie Rosenbloom's cafe. Both are upset when Helen, Buzzy's stepmother, appears and insists that the boy come to live with her. Realizing that her sudden generous act was prompted by the fact that she had learned of insurance money left Buzzy by his father, Gilbert and Howard apply to the authorities for permission to adopt the boy legally. The authorities, though in accord with Gilbert's and Howard's motive, deny their application and inform them that the boy must be adopted by a man and wife. The two apply to a matrimonial agency, but they fail to find a suitable woman. Buzzy is compelled to go live with Helen. Weeks later, Rosenbloom and June Lang, his girl-friend, go to Helen's home to visit Buzzy and find her with Wheeler Oakman, an unscrupulous racketeer, who had engineered the scheme to get Buzzy away from Gilbert and Howard. A fight breaks out in the apartment, and both Helen and Oakman are sent to jail. Maxie and June marry, so that they can legally adopt the boy for Gilbert and Howard.

Earle Snell and Arthur Caesar wrote the screen play, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and D. Ross Lederman directed it. Barney A. Sarecky was associate producer.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"An American Romance" with Brian
Donlevy and Ann Richards**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 151 min.)

Very good mass entertainment. The production, photographed in Technicolor, is excellent, has human interest, and some tears. The story, which covers the period from 1898 to the present day might be termed a cavalcade of American industry, told through the heart-warming rise of a penniless immigrant, who becomes a great industrial tycoon by virtue of hard work and a determination to better the lot of himself and his family. As the immigrant progresses through employment in the mining, steel, automotive and aircraft industries, the spectator is given a perception of the vastness of industrial America. Shown are the mountains of iron ore in Minnesota; the methods employed in shipping this ore to the steel plants; the making of steel; and the assembly-line production methods of both the automotive and aircraft industries—all this is highly informative, and it has been presented in a fascinating manner without retarding the story. Brian Donlevy, as the sturdy immigrant with an earnest

desire for learning, and Ann Richards, as the American girl who marries and encourages him, are excellent, as are the supporting members of the cast. The scenes depicting their family life are both touching and humorous. One particular sequence, where Donlevy is trapped by a ladle full of spilt molten steel, and is rescued by fellow workers, is as hair-raising an episode as has ever been seen on the screen. One's interest is held throughout the picture's 151 minutes playing time:—

Arriving at Ellis Island in 1898, Brian Donlevy sets out on foot for the Mesabi Range in Minnesota to meet John Qualen, his cousin. Qualen gets Donlevy a job in an iron ore mine. Eager to learn how the earth he mined became iron and steel, Donlevy makes the acquaintance of Ann Richards, a local school teacher, who teaches him how to read and write. Both fall in love. Encouraged by Ann to better himself, Donlevy stows away on an ore boat and makes his way to the steel mills, where he learns the rudiments of steel-making and soon becomes a foreman. He sends for Ann and marries her. As the years pass by, Donlevy progresses rapidly at the mill and raises a family of four boys and one girl. With the coming of World War I, his eldest son is killed in action. Donlevy becomes interested in developing a strong, light steel for automobiles, and Walter Abel, a mechanically-minded school teacher, becomes his partner. Ann encourages them, and the family moves to Detroit, where both men start a small auto plant. Donlevy, a natural production genius, tackles the problem of making a better car and, after many heartbreaks, the new car is a success. He becomes head of a huge auto plant. Eventually, however, he clashes with his associates and with his son (Horace McNally) over recognition of the employees' union. Donlevy refuses to admit he is wrong, and quits. Ann insists that he take a well earned rest. He buys an orange ranch in California, where they go to live quietly. With the coming of World War II, Donlevy is visited by two of his grandsons, Naval airmen, who make him realize how badly planes are needed. Donlevy goes to an aircraft factory that Abel and his son had established on the West Coast and, reconciling with them, does his bit for his adopted land in its time of need.

Herbert Dalmas and William Ludwig wrote the screen play from a story by King Vidor. Mr. Vidor produced and directed it.

Suitable for all.

**"Minstrel Man" with Benny Fields
and Gladys George**

(PRC, July 1; time, 68 min.)

Produced on a higher-than-average budget, "Minstrel Man" is a very entertaining musical-drama, representing PRC's most ambitious effort to date; it is a big step forward for the company. It should prove to be a highly satisfactory supporting feature in most situations, and strong enough to top a double-bill in others. The story is not exceptional, but it is pleasant, has heart interest, and ends in a manner sure to please audiences. Benny Fields, whose picture debut this is, gives an engaging dramatic performance, and his renditions of a number of melodious tunes are pleasant to the ear. Alan Dineheart, Gladys George, and Roscoe Karns handle supporting roles capably, as does Judy Clark, who sings in the "Betty Hutton" manner:—

Fields, on the opening night of his new show, learns that his wife had died giving birth to their daughter. Grief-stricken, Fields leaves the country and asks Gladys George and Roscoe Karns, his friends, to care for the infant. He returns five years later and, after successfully resuming his career, goes to see his daughter. He is rebuffed by Gladys, who accuses him of abandoning the child. When she informs him that he is in no position to offer the child a decent home life, Fields realizes the truth of her words and leaves the country once again. After a stay in Cuba, he books passage back to America on the S.S. Morro Castle. Following the disastrous burning of the ship off the New Jersey coast, Fields' name is listed among the missing. Gladys berates herself for sending him away, taking blame for his death. Actually, Fields was alive, but, resolved not to interfere with his child's happiness, he assumes a different name and leads every one to believe that he had been a victim of the disaster. As his daughter (Judy Clark) grows to the age of sixteen, Fields eeks out a living singing in cheap cafes. He is found in San Francisco by Jerome Cowan, a theatrical agent, who informs him that Alan Dinehart, a Broadway producer, with whom Fields had a misunderstanding on the night of his wife's death, was going to produce "Minstrel Man," the rights to which Fields owned. Fields returns to New York determined to stop the show, but when he learns that his daughter was star of the show, he becomes reconciled with his friends and joins Judy in the show's finale.

Irwin Franklin and Pierre Gendron wrote the screen play, Leo Fromkess produced it, and Joseph H. Lewis directed it. Harry Revel was Associate Producer.

Suitable for all.

**"The Girl Who Dared" with Lorna Gray,
Veda Ann Borg and Peter Cookson**
(*Republic, August 5; time, 56 min.*)

A routine murder mystery melodrama, suitable as a second feature. Following the formula set for pictures of this type, the plot places several persons in a suspicious light, keeping one guessing as to the murderer's identity. The story is somewhat involved, and since the characters are at times too talkative, the action slows up occasionally. The story's background is an isolated island during a stormy night, and the usual tricks are employed to create an eerie atmosphere. There is a little comedy and an incidental romance:—

Living on an isolated island connected to the mainland by a causeway, John Hamilton and Vivien Oakland, his wife, are surprised by the arrival of friends to attend a house party. Hamilton welcomes them, but explains that he did not send out invitations. Included among the guests were Lorna Gray and her brother, Kirk Alyn; Veda Ann Borg, a divorcee, who had been having an affair with Alyn; Veda's kindly twin sister (also played by Miss Borg); Roy Barcroft, Veda's jealous ex-husband; Grant Withers, a family friend; and Peter Cookson, a garage mechanic, who had driven Lorna and Kirk to the house when their car broke down. Cookson had been invited to remain overnight. Over the radio, all learn that a doctor friend of Veda's had stolen a fortune in radium, and had disappeared. During the night, Veda is stabbed to death, and her twin sister hysterically accuses the ex-husband of the crime. Hamilton attempts to reach the

police, but finds that the telephone wires had been cut, and that communication with them would be impossible before morning. During the night, the twin sister is murdered, and Willie Best, the colored butler, discovers the body of the missing doctor in the cellar. In the morning, Cookson reveals to Lorna that he is an insurance investigator in search of the missing radium. Together, they track down different clues and discover that Veda was involved with the doctor in the radium theft, and that a third partner, after murdering the doctor, had murdered the twin sister, and later, realizing his mistake, returned to kill Veda. Through a psychological trick, Cookson makes Withers reveal himself as the murderer.

John K. Butler wrote the screen play, Rudolph E. Abel produced it, and Howard Bretherton directed it. Unobjectionable morally.

**"Jungle Woman" with Acquanetta
and J. Carrol Naish**

(*Universal, July 7; time, 60 min.*)

The horror-picture fans should find this program melodrama to their liking. It is a sequel to Universal's "Captive Wild Woman," produced last year, in which a mad scientist had transferred a female ape into an attractive young woman. This picture is void of the gruesomeness of its predecessor in that it does not show the transformation from woman to ape; it conveys that impression, as well as the ape's vicious acts, by indirection. But what it lacks in horridness it more than makes up for in suspense, which is sustained effectively all the way through. The story is, of course, far-fetched, but it has been handled well. A good deal of footage from the first picture has been incorporated into this one by means of the flashback method.

The story begins at a coroner's inquest, during which J. Carrol Naish, a scientist, admits the murder of Acquanetta, who, he insists, had not been a human being. Prevailed upon to explain, Naish relates how John Carradine, a mad scientist, had converted Acquanetta from gorilla form to human form by means of a glandular operation. Emotional strain had caused Acquanetta to revert to gorilla form and, while she was in that form, she had been shot by a handler. Naish had taken the wounded ape to his sanitarium for research, and had saved its life with adrenalin. Soon after, the ape had escaped, and Acquanetta had been discovered on the grounds. Because of her failure to react normally, Naish had put her under observation and, through his patient efforts, her mind had improved. Acquanetta had become attracted to Richard Davis, fiance of Lois Collier, Naish's daughter, and she had displayed jealous hatred for Lois. The murder of one of the sanitarium's handymen, and other mysterious happenings, had confirmed Naish's suspicions that Acquanetta was none other than the gorilla, which had escaped from its cage. Learning that Acquanetta was about to murder his daughter, Naish had given her an overdose of adrenalin, killing her. The coroner's jury, confounded by Naish's fantastic story, request to see Acquanetta's body. At the morgue, they find that her body had reverted to gorilla form.

Henry Sucher wrote the screen play, Will Cowan produced it, and Reginald LeBorg directed it. The cast includes Evelyn Ankers, Milburn Stone, Samuel S. Hinds, Douglas Dumbrille, Richard Powers and others.

Morally unobjectionable.

life miserable for us, the patrons, and at times it was hard to hear the picture. I certainly enjoyed that picture!

"On my way out, I couldn't find anyone on the floor, up or downstairs, and the only person I saw connected with the theatre was a boy outside, changing the marquee.

"Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But that aroused my curiosity and I determined, then, that I was going to visit a theatre of every type. Did I find conditions any better in those other theatres? I did not! Decidedly no better and, in some ways, worse. Circuit theatres were, for the most part, fairly clean but, other than that, bad, all bad.

"Individually owned theatres, on the whole, gave me the worst impression. Not only the conditions mentioned above, but foyers were unclean with papers, candy and popcorn on the floor. In fact, they were filthy and the owners were standing around—just standing.

"What's your alibi, Mister? Wartime manpower? NUTS! I don't care what kind of help you have, nor how inexperienced—there is no excuse for this lack of management, this indifference to your public, this laziness on the part of theatre executives. The majority of theatres are now staffed with minors, most of them still attending schools. They are good kids, and on the whole will do what they are told to do, but they must be told, instructed and above all, watched.

"What's your alibi, Mister? Wartime? Yes, but that's the answer generally. Everything that goes wrong these days we blame on the war. We are all overworked. Our managers are overworked and we are all looking for an alibi. And war conditions give us that alibi.

"The motion picture theatres are getting a black eye. We live on entertainment and service. We must not let wartimes get us down. We should be doing everything in our power to maintain our position with the public of rendering service and entertainment. Right now we are forgetting competition, but the day is not far away when that monster 'competition for jobs and business' will again become a problem, and the fellow who stays in the good graces of his public will win out."

These writings bring to the surface that Mr. Harvey felt real anguish by the conditions he found around his territory and felt that he ought to express his feelings with the hope that his voice would be heeded.

In view of the fact that the conditions that are prevailing in Northern California, must prevail in all the smaller communities throughout the United States, the distributors could help ameliorate these conditions by rewarding the industrious exhibitor. At present, they do not seem to be making a distinction whether an exhibitor's theatre is clean or filthy, but they should, for a filthy theatre drives patrons away. When a theatre is filthy, they suffer a loss; when it is clean, they benefit by the increased patronage. Why not, then, reward the exhibitor who will, not only keep his theatre clean, but also conduct it in an orderly manner, a manner intended to render service to the motion picture public?

THE STRENGTH OF AN EXHIBITOR ORGANIZATION DEPENDS ON ITS PURITY

There have come into the exhibition field lately some exhibitors who do not understand, naturally,

many of the controversies between exhibitors and producer-distributors, and also between one exhibitor group and another.

One of the controversies between one exhibitor group and another is that between Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors (which we may call Allied for short) and Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America, known as MPTOA.

In order to give these exhibitors an idea as to why Allied and MPTOA differ, allow me to reproduce part of an editorial that appeared in Jay Emanuel's "The Exhibitor." Says Mr. Emanuel:

"One drawback to the influence of the MPTOA among many independent exhibitors has been the fact that it contains in its membership the circuit-affiliates, whose presence is most necessary to the treasury. True, the circuit-affiliates have a perfect right to organize, but their interests are not the same as those of the independent exhibitors. By their presence in MPTOA, they weaken the influence of that body. This was proven when the purely independent theatre men carried the load in the tax and Clark matters.

"It would be silly to declare that the circuit-affiliates' contributions to the MPTOA treasury are not important. Their membership dues run into thousands. The records of the most pure independent exhibitor groups show that the treasury is often the weakest part of the organization, so one may surmise how important the affiliated dues are.

"There is no reason why there should not be in this country only one purely independent exhibitor group. The affiliated circuits, with different problems and interests, could also form their own group. Both could cooperate on legislative and tax matters, or whenever the interests of the business had to be protected in a general matter.

"But before a real independent group could function, it would need a war chest, and it would demand the confidence of its members. It would not be enough just to pay dues, and to 'let it go at that.'

"Any theatremen's organization which actually or theoretically is being subsidized by the producers or distributors has no reason to exist."

The viewpoint that has been expressed by Mr. Emanuel in this editorial is the viewpoint that has been expressed by HARRISON'S REPORTS ever since it was founded. An independent exhibitor organization that exists by the grace of the producers or their affiliates ceases to be independent, by reason of the fact that, before taking any action that will serve the interests of the independents, it must always have in mind the possible withdrawal of support from the producers. On the other hand, a purely producer-exhibitor organization can be of considerable help to a purely independent organization in fighting against adverse legislation and burdensome taxes. Subsidizing a supposedly exhibitor organization for the purpose of using it in legislative halls does not get them anywhere; the legislators are already aware of the difference between a truly independent and a subsidized organization.

There have been reports lately that some unaffiliated independent exhibitor regional units are planning to join Allied. The move is sensible and should bring great results if consummated. If some exhibitor leader should feel that some of the Allied policies are wrong, he should fight against them from within the ranks, and not from without. It is the only way by which he can bring about their elimination.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

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5043 They Live in Fear—Severn-Parrish.....	June 15
5208 The Last Horseman—Russell-Hayden.....	June 22
5040 She's a Soldier Too—Bondi-Barker.....	June 29
Louisiana Hayride—Judy Canova.....	July 13
Secret Command—O'Brien-Landis (re.).....	July 20
U-Boat Prisoner—Bruce-Bennett.....	July 25
Shadows in the Night—Baxter-Foch.....	July 27
Mr. Winkle Goes to War—Robinson (re.).....	Aug. 3
Cry of the Werewolf—Massen-Crane.....	Aug. 17
Death Walks Alone—Bannon-Hobart.....	Aug. 17

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 7

424 Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble—Rooney.....	May
425 Gaslight—Boyer-Bergman-Cotten.....	May
426 Meet the People—Ball-Powell.....	May
427 Three Men in White—Barrymore.....	June
428 Two Girls and a Sailor—James-Durante.....	June
Special	
466 Tunisian Victory—Documentary.....	April 28

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

354 Law Men—J. M. Brown (55 m.).....	May 6
322 Detective Kitty O'Day—Jean Parker.....	May 13
321 The Chinese Cat—Sidney Toler.....	May 20
312 Follow the Leader—East Side Kids.....	June 3
365 Sonora Stage Coach—Trail Blazers.....	June 10
319 Return of the Ape Man—Lugosi-Carradine.....	June 17
355 Range Law—J. M. Brown (58 m.) (reset).....	July 1
307 Johnny Doesn't Live Here Anymore—Simon-Ellison-Terry (reset).....	July 8
305 Are These Are Our Parents?—Neill-Vinson.....	July 15
323 Three of a Kind—Gilbert-Howard.....	July 22
366 Trigger Law—Trail Blazers.....	July 29
Call of the Jungle—Ann Corio.....	July 29
326 Leave It to the Irish—Dunn-McKay.....	Aug. 5
356 West of the Rio Grande—J. M. Brown.....	Aug. 5
306 Oh, What a Night—Lowe-Rambeau.....	Aug. 12
325 Black Magic—Sidney Toler.....	Aug. 19

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 6

4326 Hail the Conquering Hero—Bracken-Raines.....	
4327 Take it Big—Haley-Hilliard.....	
4328 Henry Aldrich's Little Secret—Lydon-Smith.....	
4329 I Love a Soldier—Goddard-Tufts.....	
4330 The Great Moment—McCrea-Field.....	
Specials	
4335 Going My Way—Crosby-Fitzgerald.....	
4336 Lady in the Dark—Rogers-Milland.....	
4337 The Story of Dr. Wassell—Cooper-Day.....	
4338 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman.....	

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

456 The Pinto Bandit—Tex. Rangers No. 6 (56m.).....	Apr. 27
420 Men of the Sea—English cast.....	Apr. 30
464 Valley of Vengeance—Crabbe No. 6 (56 m.).....	May 5
418 The Contender—Crabbe-Judge.....	May 10
457 Spook Town—Texas Rangers No. 7 (59 m.).....	June 3
415 Waterfront—Carradine-Naish (reset).....	June 10
404 Minstrel Man—Fields-George (reset).....	July 1
416 Delinquent Daughters—Carlson-D'Orsay (re.).....	July 15
458 Brand of the Devil—Texas Rangers No. 8.....	July 15
465 Fuzzy Settles Down—Crabbe No. 7.....	July 25
417 Seven Doors to Death—Chandler-Clyde.....	July 25
421 Machine Gun Mama—Armida-Brendel.....	Aug. 2

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

- 316 Jamboree—Ruth Terry May 5
 342 Cowboy & the Lady—Roy Rogers (78 m.)... May 12
 317 Silent Partner—Henry Withers..... June 9
 320 Goodnight Sweetheart—Livingston-Terry... June 17
 343 Yellow Rose of Texas—Rogers (69 m.)..... June 24
 318 Man From Frisco—O'Shea-Shirley July 1
 319 Call of the South Seas—Martin-Lane..... July 2
 376 Call of the Rockies—Burnette-Carson (56m.) July 14
 3305 Comin' Round the Mountain—Autry (reissue) July 15
 321 Secrets of Scotland Yard—Bachelor-Barrier.. July 26
 344 Song of Nevada—Roy Rogers (74 m.)..... Aug. 5
 322 The Girl Who Dared—Gray-Cookson..... Aug. 5
 324 Port of 40 Thieves—Bachelor-Powers..... Aug. 13

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 3311 Tucson Raiders—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.)..... May 14
 3312 Marshal of Reno—Elliott-Blake (56 m.)..... July 2
 461 Silver City Kid—Lane-Stewart (55 m.)..... July 20

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 5

- 421 The Falcon Out West—Conway.....
 422 Days of Glory—Peck-Toumanova.....
 423 Yellow Canary—Neagle-Greene.....
 424 Seven Days Ashore—Carney-Brown.....
 425 Show Business—Cantor-Murphy-Davis.....

Block 6

- 426 Gildersleeve's Ghost—Harold Peary.....
 427 Marine Raiders—O'Brien-Ryan.....
 428 A Night of Adventure—Tom Conway.....
 429 Step Lively—Sinatra-Murphy-DeHaven.....
 430 Youth Runs Wild—Smith-Granville.....

Specials

- 451 The North Star—Baxter-Huston.....
 452 Up in Arms—Danny Kaye.....
 492 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (reissue).....
 461 Goyescas—Spanish production.....

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 10

- 427 Pin Up Girl—Grable-Raye..... May
 428 Bermuda Mystery—Foster-Rutherford..... May

Block 11

- 429 Eve of St. Mark—O'Shea-Baxter..... June
 430 Ladies of Washington—Graham-Marshall..... June
 431 Roger Touhy, Gangster—Foster-McLaglen..... July
 432 Candlelight in Algeria—English cast..... July
 433 Home in Indiana—McCallister-Haver..... July

Special

- Song of Bernadette—Jennifer Jones..... not set

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Lumber Jack—Hopalong Cassidy (64 m.)..... Apr. 28
 Up in Mabel's Room—O'Keefe-Reynolds..... Apr. 28
 Mystery Man—Hopalong Cassidy (58 m.)..... May 31
 Song of the Open Road—Jane Powell..... June 2
 The Hairy Ape—Bendix-Hayward..... June 16
 Forty Thieves—Hopalong Cassidy (60 m.)..... June 23
 Sensations of 1945—Powell-O'Keefe..... June 30
 Summer Storm—Darnell-Sanders..... July 14
 Abroad with Two Yanks—Bendix-O'Keefe..... Aug. 4

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 8036 Slightly Terrific—Errol-Rooney..... May 5
 8006 Cobra Woman—Montez-Hall..... May 12
 8032 Pardon My Rhythm—Jean-Knowles..... May 19
 8019 The Scarlet Claw—Rathbone-Bruce..... May 26
 8085 Boss of Boomtown—Rod Cameron (56 m.)... May 26
 8012 This is the Life—O'Connor-Foster..... June 2
 The Invisible Man's Revenge—Hall-Ankers..... June 9
 Ghost Catchers—Olsen & Johnson (reset)..... June 16
 South of Dixie—Gwynne-Bruce (reset)..... June 23
 Christmas Holiday—Durbine-Kelly..... June 30
 Jungle Woman—Acquanetta-Naish..... July 7
 The Mummy's Ghost—Chaney-Carradine..... July 7
 8086 Trigger Trail—Rod Cameron..... July 7
 Twilight on the Prairie—Quillan-Errol..... July 14
 8087 Trail to Gunsight—Eddie Dew..... Aug. 18

Warner-First National Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 313 Shine on Harvest Moon—Sheridan-Morgan... Apr. 8
 314 Uncertain Glory—Flynn-Lucas..... Apr. 22
 316 Between Two Worlds—Garfield-Henreid..... May 20
 317 Make Your Own Bed—Carson-Manning..... June 10
 224 This Is the Army—Leslie-Murphy (re-release) June 24
 318 The Mask of Dimitrios—Greenstreet-Lorre... July 1
 315 The Adventures of Mark Twain—March..... July 22
 319 Mr. Skeffington—Davis-Rains..... August

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE

Columbia—One Reel

- 5661 Community Songs No. 11 (10 m.)..... May 16
 5504 The Disillusioned Bluebird—Col. Rhap. (7m) May 26
 5860 Screen Snapshots No. 10 (9½)..... June 2
 5708 Tangled Travels—Phantasies (7 m.)..... June 9
 5809 Mat Maulers (formerly "Give and Take")—
 Sports..... June 19
 5662 Community Songs No. 12..... June 30
 5709 Mr. Fore by Fore—Phantasies..... July 7
 5810 G. I. Sports—Sports..... July 28
 5603 A Peekoolyar Sitcheeayshun—Li'l Abner
 (reset)..... July 28
 5754 Mr. Mocher—Fox & Crow..... July 28

Columbia—Two Reels

- 5411 Oh, Baby!—Hugh Herbert (18½ m.)..... Apr. 17
 5422 Crazy Like a Fox—Gilbert (18½ m.)..... May 1
 5407 The Yoke's On Me—Stooges (16 m.)..... May 26
 5436 You Were Never Uglier—Clyde (18 m.)..... June 2
 5423 Mopey Dopey—Brendel (16½ m.)..... June 16
 5140 The Twin Brothers—Desert Hawk (18m) (re) July 7
 5412 His Hotel Sweet—Herbert..... July 9
 5141 The Evil Eye—Desert Hawk (18m.) (re)... July 14
 5142 The Mark of the Scimitar—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.) (re.)..... July 21
 5143 A Caliph's Treachery—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.) (re.)..... July 28
 5144 The Secret of the Palace—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.) (re.)..... Aug. 4
 5145 The Feast of the Beggars—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.) (re.)..... Aug. 11

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel

- W-534 Million Dollar Cat—Cartoon (7 m.) (re.) May 6
 T-518 Colorful Colorado—Traveltalk (10m.) (re) May 20
 K-571 The Immortal Blacksmith—Pass. Parade
 (11 m.)..... May 20
 M-587 Why Daddy—Miniature (9 m.)..... May 20
 T-519 Roaming Through Arizona—Travel (10m.) June 3
 W-535 The Tree Surgeon—Cartoon (8 m.)..... June 3
 M-588 Somewhere, U.S.A.—Miniature (10 m.)... June 3
 T-520 City of Brigham Young—Travel (10 m.)... June 17
 W-536 Happy-Go-Nutty—Cartoon (7 m.)..... June 24
 S-555 Movie Pests—Pete Smith..... July 8

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels

1942-43

- A-405 Patrolling the Ether—Special (20 m.).... Apr. 22
 A-406 Easy Life—Special (20 m.)..... May 20

1943-44

- X-510 Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.).... Jan. 1

Paramount—One Reel

- D3-3 Lulu Gets the Birdie—Little Lulu (8 m.)... Mar. 31
 J3-4 Popular Science No. 4 (10 m.)..... Apr. 17
 E3-3 We're On Our Way to Rio—Popeye (8 m.)... Apr. 21
 P3-4 Suddenly its Spring—Noveltoons (10 m.)... Apr. 28
 R3-7 Trail Breakers—Spotlight (9 m.)..... Apr. 28
 U3-5 And To Think I Saw It on Mullberry Street—
 Mad. Models (9 m.)..... May 5
 L3-4 Unusual Occupations No. 4 (10 m.)..... May 12
 D3-4 In Hollywood—Little Lulu (8 m.)..... May 19
 Y3-4 Your Pet Problem—Speak. of Animals (9m) May 19
 E3-4 Anvil Chorus Girl—Popeye (7 m.)..... May 26
 J3-5 Popular Science No. 5 (10 m.)..... June 2
 R3-8 Speed Couriers—Spotlight (9 m.)..... June 9
 L3-5 Unusual Occupations No. 5 (10 m.)..... June 23
 D3-5 Lucky Lulu—Little Lulu (9 m.)..... June 30
 R3-9 Catch 'Em and Eat 'Em—Spotlight..... July 7
 Y3-5 In a Harem—Speak. of Animals..... July 14
 E3-5 Spinach Packin' Popeye—Popeye..... July 21
 U3-6 Jasper Goes Hunting—Madcap Models..... July 28
 J3-6 Popular Science No. 6..... Aug. 4
 E3-6 Puppet Love—Popeye..... Aug. 11
 D3-6 It's Nifty to be Thrifty—Little Lulu..... Aug. 18

Paramount—Two Reels

FF3-4 Showboat Serenade—Musical Parade (20m.) Apr. 14
 FF3-5 Fun Time—Musical Parade (20 m.) June 16
 FF3-6 Halfway to Heaven—Musical Parade (19m) Aug. 25

RKO—One Reel

44308 On Paint—Sportscope (8 m.) Mar. 24
 44309 Past Performances—Sportscope (8 m.) Apr. 21
 44310 Boys Camp—Sportscope (8 m.) May 19

RKO—Two Reels

43405 Radio Rampage—Edgar Kennedy (16 m.) Apr. 28
 43107 Viva Mexico—This is America (17 m.) May 5
 43108 Hot Money—This is America (17 m.) June 2

Republic—Two Reels

383 The Tiger Woman—Stirling-Lane
 (12 episodes) May 27

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

4203 Mailman of Snake River—Adventure (9 m.) May 5
 4516 My Boy, Johnny—Terrytoon (6½ m.) May 12
 4351 Nymph of the Southland—Sports (9 m.) May 26
 4517 Wolf! Wolf!—Terrytoon (6 m.) June 2
 4902 Coney Island—Lew Lehr Makes the News
 (9 m.) June 9
 4518 Eliza on the Ice—Terrytoon (6 m.) June 16
 4304 Winning Form (formerly "Gridiron
 Highlights")—Sports June 30
 4519 The Green Line—Terrytoon (6 m.) July 7
 4352 Blue Grass Gentleman—Sports July 14
 4520 Carmen's Veranda—Terrytoon (7 m.) July 28

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

Vol. 10 No. 9—The Irish Question—March of Time
 (18 min.) Apr. 21
 Vol. 10 No. 10—Underground Report—March of Time
 (20 min.) May 19
 Vol. 10 No. 11—Back Door to Tokyo—March of Time
 (19 min.) June 6

Universal—One Reel

8233 Jungle Jive—Swing Symphony (7 m.) May 15
 8379 The Fantastic Castle—Per. Odd. (9 m.)
 (formerly "Varga & His Beauties") May 22
 8360 Mr. Chimp Goes South—Var. Views (9 m.) May 29
 8239 Fish Fry—Cartune (7 m.) June 19
 8380 The Honest Forger—Per. Odd. (9 m.) June 19
 8361 Bear Mountain Game—Var. Views (9 m.) June 26
 8381 Idol of the Crowd—Per. Odd. (9 m.) July 24
 8362 Spruce to Bomber—Var. Views (9 m.) July 31
 8234 Abou-Ben-Boogie—Swing Symphony (7 m.) July 31

Universal—Two Reels

8129 Melody Garden—Musical (15 m.) May 17
 8885 The Bridge of Disaster—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 5 (20 m.) May 23
 8886 Shadowing Doom—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 6 (20 m.) May 30
 8887 Crashing Timbers—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 7 (20 m.) June 6
 8888 In a Flaming Plane—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 8 (20 m.) June 13
 8130 Pagliacci Swings it—Musical (15 m.) June 14
 8889 Hurling Through Space—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 9 (20 m.) June 20
 8890 Tricked by a Booby Trap—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 10 (20 m.) June 27
 8891 The Tunnel of Terror—Great Alaskan
 Mystery No. 11 (20 m.) July 4
 8892 Electrocuting—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 12 (20 min.) July 11
 8893 The Boomerang—Great Alaskan Mystery
 No. 13 (20 m.) July 18
 8131 Midnight Melodies—Musical (15 m.) July 19

Vitaphone—One Reel

9310 Thugs With Dirty Mugs—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)
 (reissue) June 3
 9709 Angel Puss—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) (re.) June 3
 9508 Filipino Sports Parade—Sports (10 m. (re.) June 10
 9606 Songs of the Range—Mel. Mas. (10 m. (re.) June 10
 9311 A Wild Hare—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)
 (re.) June 17
 9710 Slightly Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) (re.) June 17
 9510 Cattleman's Days—Sports (10 m.) (re.) June 24
 9723 Hare Ribbin'—Bugs Bunny (7 m.) (re.) June 24
 9511 Colorado Trout—Sports (10 m.) (re.) July 1

9609 Junior Dive Bombers—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) July 1
 9711 Brother Brat—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) July 15
 9312 The Cat Came Back—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
 (7 m.) July 15
 9406 Throwing the Bull—Varieties (10 m.) July 29
 9724 Hare Force—Bugs Bunny (7 m.) July 29
 9512 Champions of the Future—Sports (10 m.) Aug. 12
 9712 Plane Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Aug. 12
 9313 Isle of Pingo Pongo—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
 (7 m.) Aug. 19
 9610 Listen to the Bands—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) Aug. 19
 9513 Bluenose Schooner—Sports (10 m.) Aug. 26
 9713 Birdy and the Beast—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Aug. 26

Vitaphone—Two Reels

9005 Winners Circle—Special (20 m.) May 6
 9112 Trial by Trigger—Sante Fe Western (20 m.)
 (reset) May 27
 9106 Halls of Montezuma—Featurette (20 m.) July 8
 9004 Devil Boats—Special (20 m.) (reset) July 22

NEWSWEEKLY NEW YORK RELEASE DATES

Pathe News

45189 Sat. (O) July 1
 45290 Wed. (E) July 5
 45191 Sat. (O) July 8
 45292 Wed. (E) July 12
 45193 Sat. (O) July 15
 45294 Wed. (E) July 19
 45195 Sat. (O) July 22
 45296 Wed. (E) July 26
 45197 Sat. (O) July 29
 45298 Wed. (E) Aug. 2
 45199 Sat. (O) Aug. 5
 452100 Wed. (E) Aug. 9
 451101 Sat. (O) Aug. 12

Metrotone News

284 Thurs. (E) June 29
 285 Tues. (O) July 4
 286 Thurs. (E) July 6
 287 Tues. (O) July 11
 288 Thurs. (E) July 13
 289 Tues. (O) July 18
 290 Thurs. (E) July 20
 291 Tues. (O) July 25
 292 Thurs. (E) July 27
 293 Tues. (O) Aug. 1
 294 Thurs. (E) Aug. 3
 295 Tues. (O) Aug. 8
 296 Thurs. (E) Aug. 10
 297 Tues. (O) Aug. 15

Paramount News

87 Sunday (O) July 2
 88 Thurs. (E) July 6
 89 Sunday (O) July 9
 90 Thurs. (E) July 13
 91 Sunday (O) July 16
 92 Thurs. (E) July 20
 93 Sunday (O) July 23
 94 Thurs. (E) July 27
 95 Sunday (O) July 30
 96 Thurs. (E) Aug. 3
 97 Sunday (O) Aug. 6
 98 Thurs. (E) Aug. 10

Universal

306 Fri. (E) June 30
 307 Wed. (O) July 5
 308 Fri. (E) July 7
 309 Wed. (O) July 12
 310 Fri. (E) July 14
 311 Wed. (O) July 19
 312 Fri. (E) July 21
 313 Wed. (O) July 26
 314 Fri. (E) July 28
 315 Wed. (O) Aug. 2
 316 Fri. (E) Aug. 4
 317 Wed. (O) Aug. 9
 318 Fri. (E) Aug. 11

Fox Movietone

86 Thurs. (E) June 29
 87 Tues. (O) July 4
 88 Thurs. (E) July 6
 89 Tues. (O) July 11
 90 Thurs. (E) July 13
 91 Tues. (O) July 18
 92 Thurs. (E) July 20
 93 Tues. (O) July 25
 94 Thurs. (E) July 27
 95 Tues. (O) Aug. 1
 96 Thurs. (E) Aug. 3
 97 Tues. (O) Aug. 8
 98 Thurs. (E) Aug. 10

All American News

88 Friday June 30
 89 Friday July 7
 90 Friday July 14
 91 Friday July 21
 92 Friday July 28
 93 Friday Aug. 4
 94 Friday Aug. 11

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Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, JULY 8, 1944

No. 28

Has Theatre Television Arrived?—No. 1

In the last few months there have appeared in the daily newspapers accounts of the progress that television has made, and the statement that, immediately after hostilities cease, there will be a rush to manufacture television sets for the home, and television equipment for the theatres. These statements have been picked up by the trade papers and have been so treated by them as to throw a scare into almost every exhibitor. As a matter of fact, some advice has been given to each exhibitor to put a television receiver in his theatre as soon as one is obtainable; on the other hand, some quarters have advised him not to be disturbed since, in their opinion, television has no place in a motion picture theatre.

All this commotion has been caused by the publicity that followed demonstrations of theatre television in recent years, with the result that the exhibitors have been either confused or alarmed.

In the motion picture industry, HARRISON'S REPORTS has been to the forefront in dealing with technical subjects with only one thought in mind—to enlighten the industry as to the progress of any new art closely related to motion picture exhibition. As said in the issue of June 24, when in 1928 talking pictures seemed to have come to stay, this writer went to a foremost authority on the subject, and, on the information furnished him, wrote a series of articles by which he made clear how sound worked, and which sound system was the better. Later on he obtained information on Wide Film pictures, third dimension pictures, pictures in natural colors, and on Television when it was still in its infancy.

Since Television has made considerable progress from the time that I wrote the last articles on the subject, I went to the same authority and obtained the latest information, and got hold of writings, statements, and reports on the subject from other sources, with the object of setting the minds of the exhibitors at rest and, incidentally, of making suggestions to such of the other major companies as are contemplating to follow the example of the companies that have already taken up television.

On account of the fact that many exhibitors are late-comers in the exhibition field and have not had an opportunity to read what was said in this paper before about television, a few of the explanations may be repetitious.

What is theatre Television?

The presentation to the theatre audience of a television picture comparable to the talking picture in size and definition, as well as sufficiently clear to satisfy an audience, and entertaining enough when the audience compares its amusement values with those of the talking pictures.

How much has theatre television progressed?

To answer this question satisfactorily, it is necessary that you be given some historical facts:

Several years ago television demonstrations were given in London by two companies, the Baird Company and the Scophony Corporation.

The Baird Company used what is known as a cathode-ray tube system. In this system, there is a glass tube that looks something like a very large radio receiver tube, but which produces on one flat end of such tube an extremely bright television picture. The pictures produced on that end are three or four inches in size, and are so brilliant that they cannot be looked at with the naked eye. In order to produce the picture, television signals are received by either radio or wire; these are then used to control this tube, which we may, for convenience, call a "cr" tube.

To operate these tubes so as to obtain pictures of the needed brightness, considerable high-voltage electric power is required. As a matter of fact, the voltages generally used for this purpose range between 50,000 and 100,000 volts. These voltages produce an electricity stream (electrons), which is shot against the end of the tube at a material that is made to glow by the electrons that strike it. By controlling this stream of electricity while moving it rapidly over the end surface of the tube, there is produced a television picture.

Usually thirty complete pictures are produced each second but, in order to prevent flicker, there is used a "trick" that gives the effect of the production of sixty pictures per second. This special trick is called "interlaced scanning," and its use has, one may say, an effect similar to the three-blade shutter (or a two-blade, if direct current is used) used to prevent flicker in a moving picture projector.

Once the bright television picture is on the "cr" tube, it is projected by a special lens or mirror system on the theatre screen.

The sizes of television pictures that have been so far produced are between nine by twelve feet and fifteen by twenty feet. As a general rule, however, the larger the picture the less bright.

A television demonstration of a second type was given in London by the company that had developed it—the Scophony Corporation. This system is entirely different from that of the Baird Company. The television signals are received in the same manner as those in the Baird system—by either radio or wire, and are used to control the picture projector; but this projector does not contain a "cr" tube. It has, instead, a peculiar device, called a "supersonic cell"; it looks very much like a small tank filled with a transparent liquid. Optical parts, which are rather elaborate (lenses and moving mirrors or drums), are employed to pass the light from a powerful arc lamp through the cell, and then project bright moving spots, with suitable rapid motion, on the screen on which the television picture appears.

From this description you will, I am sure, realize that the system is optical and mechanical in nature. The actual motion of the mirror drums is accomplished by two motors, one of which runs at an extremely high speed.

The speed of the two motors is, of course, controlled accurately so that the pictures are formed in correct and steady relationship. (Continued on back page)

"Dixie Jamboree" with Frances Langford
(PRC, no release date set; time, 71 min.)

Those companies that are grinding out program musicals like sausages might learn a thing or two if they should take a look at PRC's "Dixie Jamboree," for even though the story is inconsequential it has been presented in a refreshing way, with good comedy situations and tuneful music. It packs more entertainment either in music or in comedy than most pictures of this type, and it is the sort that leaves one in a happy mood. Most of the action takes place aboard a Mississippi River showboat, and many comical situations result from the efforts of Guy Kibbee and Charles Butterworth to perfect and sell a healing medicine to the showboat's patrons. Eddie Quillan as a trumpet player, who plays only when inspired, and Frank Jenks as a racketeer, who books passage on the boat to hide from the police, add much to the comedy. Frances Langford is very appealing as the showboat's singing star, and her singing is effective, particularly when she sings "Big Stuff" to a little colored pickaninny dressed in grown-up clothes. The picture is worthy of a place on any program, in any situation, on either half of a double-bill:—

Lyle Talbot and Frank Jenks, gangsters hiding from the St. Louis police, book passage to New Orleans on a Mississippi River showboat captained by Guy Kibbee, who depended on the sale of a patent medicine to keep his boat in operation. Unknown to Kibbee, negro helpers had mistakenly dumped two barrels of whiskey, instead of water, into the water tank from which Kibbee filled his medicine bottles. Before the ship gets under way, Frances Langford, Kibbee's niece and the showboat's star, meets Eddie Quillan, an exceptionally good trumpet player, who could play only when inspired by Frances' singing. She induces him to join up with the show. During the cruise, the gangsters discover that the patent medicine bottles contained whiskey, and erroneously believe that the water tank held many thousands of gallons of whiskey. When Kibbee refuses their offer to buy the boat, the gangsters plot to hijack the whiskey. Frances overhears their plans and informs Quillan. But Talbot learns that Quillan and Frances had discovered his plans; he imprisons them in an empty cabin. Quillan, by playing his trumpet, attracts the attention of Charles Butterworth, pianist in the show, who frees them just as police board the ship and arrest the gangsters.

Sam Neuman wrote the screen play, Jack Schwarz produced it, and Christy Cabanne directed it. The cast includes Fifi D'Orsay, Almira Sessions, Louise Beavers, the Ben Carter Choir and others. (Suitable for all.)

**"Once Upon a Time" with Cary Grant,
Janet Blair and Ted Donaldson**
(Columbia, May 11; time, 89 min.)

Very pleasant entertainment. It is a delightful fantasy, the sort that should appeal to all classes of audiences in all age groups, for the story is imaginative, comical, and heart-warming. Originally presented on the radio under the title, "My Client Curley," the story revolves around a young boy and his dancing caterpillar, and a selfish but likeable broken-down Broadway producer, who attempts to capitalize on this phenomenon at the expense of the boy's tender feelings and devotion to the insect. The idea of a dancing caterpillar (which, incidentally, the spectator never sees) and the amazement it would cause, offered many opportunities for rich comedy, and director Alexander Hall has made the most of

them, for the doings keep one chuckling all the way through. Ted Donaldson, as the boy, is an appealing youngster, from whom more will undoubtedly be heard; his boyish wonderment, his love for a pet, his idolatry of Grant, and his bitter disappointment when Grant breaks faith with him, are feelings he imparts to the spectator effectively. Cary Grant, as the producer, is good in a role tailored to his style, and Janet Blair, James Gleason, and William Demarest lend able support in minor roles. The ending, where the caterpillar turns into a butterfly, gives the sentimental fable both a logical and pleasant twist:—

Grant, faced with the loss of his theatre unless he meets a \$100,000 note, meets Ted, who insists that he look at "Curly," his dancing caterpillar, which the boy kept in a shoe box. Grant is amazed to see the caterpillar rise on its tail and dance to Ted's harmonica music. Seeing in "Curly" an opportunity to raise the money he needs, Grant makes the boy his partner and sets out on a publicity campaign. The newspapermen scoff at his story and refuse to look into the box, but Gabriel Heatter, the radio commentator, sees the caterpillar for himself and gives "Curly" national fame. When Ted overhears a representative of Walt Disney's offer Grant \$25,000 for "Curly," he makes Grant promise never to sell the worm. Grant, however, privately demands \$100,000 from Disney. In the meantime, Grant has his troubles with Janet Blair, Ted's sister, who refuses to permit Ted to have anything to do with him. But Grant eventually wins her over. When Disney agrees to meet Grant's price, Grant instructs James Gleason, his aide, to steal "Curly" while Ted is asleep. Gleason, realizing Grant was wrong, gets drunk to gain courage to take "Curly" from the boy. His noisiness wakes the boy, who, realizing what he was up to, takes "Curly" and returns home to Janet. Enraged when Ted refuses to part with "Curly," Grant, in a fit of temper, slaps him. Soon after, "Curly" disappears, and the public and police take up the search for it. Through it all, Ted refuses to see Grant, who was remorseful because he had destroyed the boy's faith in him. Finally, a group of youngsters bring Grant and Ted together in Ted's home. While Grant absently picks a tune on the piano, a butterfly flies out from the mechanism. It was "Curly" responding to the music. Circling the room as if bidding Ted good-bye, the butterfly flies out the window.

Lewis Meltzer and Oscar Saul wrote the screen play, and Louis F. Edleman produced it.

"U-Boat Prisoner" with Bruce Bennett
(Columbia, July 25; time, 67 min.)

Just a routine program war melodrama, with enough fisticuffs and suspense to satisfy those action fans who are not concerned too much about the plausibility of a plot. Discriminating audiences may find it a bit too dull. Several situations are fairly exciting. One such situation is where Bruce Bennett and a U-Boat captain, both trapped in a sunken submarine, draw lots to see who will remain behind to send the other to the surface through a torpedo tube. But on the whole it is far-fetched stuff, and women in particular will find little in it to interest them, for it has an all-male cast and is without a romance:—

Bruce Bennett, an American seaman, notices George Eldridge, a crew member, leave their tanker on a raft seconds before a U-Boat torpedoes it. Realizing that Eldridge was a Nazi spy, Bennett swims to the raft and throws him overboard. Bennett is picked up by the U-Boat and, having Eldridge's papers, rep-

resents himself to Captain Erik Rolf as the spy. Bennett is quartered with a group of prisoners, scientists who were being taken to Germany to do forced labor. He reveals his identity to them. When the U-Boat is chased and depth-bombed unsuccessfully by an American destroyer, the prisoners try to aid the destroyer by creating noises while the U-Boat lies silent to avoid detection. The Captain, to fool the destroyer into thinking that the U-Boat had been blown up, sends a sick sailor, against the man's will, up to the surface through the torpedo tubes. The sailor manages to survive the ordeal long enough to inform the Americans of the deception. The U-Boat continues a game of hide-and-seek with the destroyer, but Bennett manages to knock out the radio operator, and to send a signal to the Americans. In a last desperate effort to escape, the Captain surfaces during a fog and sends his men out on a raft, with magnetic mines, to blow up the destroyer. The Americans rout the men, and the mines slip into the water and blow up the U-Boat, which sinks to the bottom. A few men remain alive in the locked torpedo room, including Bennett and the captain. They draw lots to see who will remain behind to send the others to the surface through the torpedo tubes. Bennett loses the draw. As Bennett puts the Captain into one of the tubes, a scientist, whom every one thought dead, knocks Bennett unconscious and sends him up in another tube, leaving the captain wedged in the first tube to die.

Aubrey Wisberg wrote the screen play, Wallace McDonald produced it and Lew Landers directed it.

"The Mummy's Ghost" with Lon Chaney, John Carradine and Ramsay Ames

(Universal, July 7; time, 60 min.)

Mediocre! It is the fourth in Universal's "Mummy" series of program horror melodramas, and it is also the weakest of the lot. At the Rialto Theatre in New York, a house noted for its avid mystery and horror fans, the audience greeted the actions of the characters with derisive laughter. And one cannot blame them, for the proceedings become ludicrous to the extreme as the players strain to inject creepiness and all the other well known nonsense identified with pictures of this type. Few horror pictures, if any, are logical, but this one carries absurdity too far in its telling of a mummy's kidnapping a young woman, who was the reincarnation of his sweetheart, dead for more than 3000 years. The story ends in a manner that leaves an opening for a continuation of the series, but unless Universal finds stronger story material it would be better off to drop the series:—

John Carradine, ordained to priesthood by the High Priest of Arkam in Egypt, is told that thirty years previously, American Egyptologists had broken into the tomb of the Princess Ananka and had carried away her sarcophagus. The High Priest explains that the Princess had died 3000 years previously accursed for the sin of falling in love with Kharis (Lon Chaney), a man beneath her station in life. As punishment, Kharis had been placed into the tomb and, all these years, had been kept alive by a secret brew of Tana leaves, in order to destroy any one molesting the tomb. Kharis had followed the Egyptologists to America and had killed them all. The high priest, feeling that Kharis was still alive, sends Carradine to America to locate him and to bring back the Princess' remains. Arriving in the United States, Carradine goes to the town of Mapleton, where he contacts Kharis. After committing a number of murders, thus

rousing the townspeople, Kharis leads Carradine to the Scripps College Museum, where they discover that the Princess' remains had turned to dust, a fact which indicated that she had been reincarnated into human form. Carradine orders Kharis to find the reincarnated person. Some hidden instinct leads Kharis to Ramsay Ames, a college student, and he carries the sleeping girl to a lonely shack where Carradine awaited him. Carradine, succumbing to the girl's beauty, decides to keep her for himself. The jealous Kharis thereupon strangles him and, taking Ramsay in his arms, heads toward a dangerous swamp, to escape from a posse led by Robert Lowery, Ramsay's sweetheart. As Kharis stumbles along, Ramsay's form slowly turns into the mummified remains of the ancient Princess. Both disappear beneath the treacherous swamp waters just as the posse reaches them.

Griffin Jay, Henry Sucher, and Brenda Weisberg wrote the screen play, Ben Pivar produced it, and Reginald Le Borg directed it. (Not for children.)

"Machine Gun Mama" with Armida, El Brendel and Wallace Ford

(PRC, August 2; time, 62 min.)

Despite the far-fetched and somewhat nonsensical story, this is a fairly amusing program comedy with music. It lags occasionally, but it should please audiences fairly well because of the comedy situations that arise when two Brooklyn truck drivers find themselves deep in Mexico with an elephant on their hands. Some of the comedy is pure slapstick. Except for an occasional burst of her fiery latin temper, Armida plays a subdued role in a very appealing way. One wishes, however, that she were given more of an opportunity to sing and dance. As a matter of fact, a little less story and a bit more music would have helped the picture considerably:—

Wallace Ford and El Brendel, two Brooklyn truck drivers, lose the delivery address for their cargo—an elephant—and find themselves stranded in Mexico. To dispose of the elephant, the two men offer to sell it to Julian Rivero, owner of a defunct carnival, whose daughter, Armida, enthusiastically accepts the idea, and asks the two men to wait a few days for payment. Armida and Ford are attracted to each other. Jack LaRue, a racketeer, to whom the carnival owner paid exorbitant interest on a loan, fears lest the elephant boost the carnival's business and enable Rivero to repay the loan. Moreover, he resented the attentions Armida lavished on Ford. When detectives arrive in town looking for two men with an elephant, Ford declines to go through with the sale of the animal lest he get in trouble. This action rouses Rivero's anger. Meanwhile the owner of the elephant arrives in town and demands that the police arrest Ford and Brendel. To add to Ford's troubles, LaRue steals a sum of money from the carnival's safe and leads Armida and her father to believe that Ford was the thief. And to complicate matters even more, Armida assumes that Ford is married when the police inform her that an American woman had arrived in town in search of her husband. Ford and Brendel escape from the police and go to Armida to plead their innocence. She receives them coldly, but when the American woman identifies LaRue as her husband, and the police uncover him as the thief, Armida realizes that she had done Ford and Brendel an injustice.

Sam Neuman wrote the screen play, Jack Schwarz produced it, and Harold Young directed it. The cast includes Luis Alberni and others. (Suitable for all.)

The Scophony system obtains its light for the image, as already said, from an arc lamp, whereas the "cr" tube system obtains its light from what is called a fluorescent material. This material glows brightly at the end of the "cr" tube when the controlled electrical stream "paints" on it the television picture.

Both the Baird and the Scophony systems aroused considerable interest. The selling of admission tickets by theatres that showed television pictures in London of either horse races or prize fights proved possible. The programs were picked up by the British Broadcasting Corporation, and were sent out by radio; they were then picked up by the television receiver at the theatre. Spot news of this sort seemed to attract theatre-goers who, in one case, paid to the theatre for a ticket several dollars. The pictures were pronounced fairly good in each case, but no one can say how long they would have attracted the public, or whether it was this new art or the sports events that held the public's attention.

Did the public feel the same pleasure seeing the event at a theatre by means of television as it would if it had seen it at the race track?

It is, of course, possible to follow a horse race on a television screen without knowing which horse will win until the race is over. In such a case, the excitement created is undoubtedly as great as that at the race track itself.

In this respect, television seems to have a certain advantage over a newsreel of the same race, even if the newsreel picture should be better, for, in television, the spectator does not know in advance which horse will win, whereas in a newsreel the result of the race is already known. Consequently, the pleasure that a person will derive from seeing the event televised is much better than seeing it in a newsreel.

There has been one major theatre television demonstration given in the United States by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA)—a pioneer in the American theatre television field. The event took place at the New Yorker Theatre, in New York City; it was given by RCA on a fifteen by twenty foot screen, the main event being a prize fight, fought within a few blocks of the theatre. Some secondary events of varied interest were shown that same evening. This demonstration was shown to an invited audience consisting of several hundred guests. The editor of this paper was there, and the impression he received was that the brightness of the picture was lacking considerably at that time; it lacked also the smoothness of moving picture projection. The audience, however, seemed to be favorably impressed.

The equipment was of the "cr" type, and the optical projection system employed differed greatly from that of the usual film projector; it consisted of a large mirror and a so-called "correction plate." It was very efficient in picking up the light from the "cr" tube and sending it to the screen—it picked up practically all the light.

The Baird Company, too, has demonstrated theatre television equipment in New York, in a small studio-theatre, projecting a nine by twelve foot picture. This equipment was also of the "cr" tube type.

The Scophony Corporation of America, too, set up theatre television equipment of the mechanical optical type in its New York studios, where it projected a picture of approximately nine by twelve feet. Likewise at the Rialto Theatre, in New York City, showing broadcast pictures to a regular audience.

(Continued next week)

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Under the heading, "The Ascaph Racket," "Chick" Lewis printed the following editorial in the June 17 issue of his *Showmen's Trade Review*:

"The New Jersey Allied meeting in Atlantic City reminds us that the organization might do well to consider and sponsor a strong fight against the Ascaph seat tax. In the midst of booming business it seems that this important matter has been forgotten again.

"In our opinion this levy is unwarranted and unjustified. In the silent days when a theatre employed musicians and organists, they were in a position to control the music being played. Today they have no control over it whatever. They get their music in cans along with the pictures they buy and they have to reproduce it whether they like it or not.

"Why the two national exhibitor organizations have done so little about this situation is something we've never been able to figure out. But there is no other single activity they can sponsor that will help the vast majority more than the fight against the Ascaph seat levy."

In the issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS of September 8, 1934, there was published an enlightening article by Mr. George S. Ryan, the eminent attorney of Boston. In that article it was pointed out that, though in the days of silent pictures Ascaph was not doing interstate business, and therefore the Society could not be sued under the Federal anti-trust laws, since the advent of talking pictures it may come under these laws, for their music is part and parcel of the films, which are interstate commerce.

That there is a grave injustice committed on the exhibitors when they are asked to pay royalty for music that they may not want to play, but they must because it is recorded on the sound track, no one may question. But since no action has been taken by any exhibitor, the Society continues to collect royalties from exhibitors who do not wish to create a controversy that may give them annoyance.

Something should be done to clarify the issue. And the only way that it could be clarified is through the courts, with the exhibitor organizations intervening as friends of the court. If the courts should determine that the Society is within its rights in collecting this royalty, then the exhibitors would have no way out but to pay. But they should know whether or not they have to pay this obnoxious tax.

CAN YOU EAT YOUR CAKE AND STILL HAVE IT?

A recent issue of *Daily Variety* published partly the following:

"First-run theatre operators feel no immediate threat in announcement of large personnel layoffs slated for several aircraft plants here during next few months. Exhibitors point out that as long as product has top commercial audience values, box office will continue to be big locally. Another angle to layoff is that theatre trade, if following normal course, would increase due to added leisure time of former war workers before finding new employment. . . ."

My friend Arthur Ungar, editor of *Daily Variety*, seems to be the kind of person who believes that one could eat his cake and still have it. He believes that, even if men are laid off from the war plants, the picture theatre business will be good just the same, for the defense plant workers will have plentiful leisure time and will spend their money going to the movies until they find a new job.

Even if he should be right, the "millennium" will end when and if they get a new job; they will be broke, and will begin saving. It is then that the picture theatres will feel the effect, particularly if the quality of pictures remains at the present low level.

And talking about the low level of picture quality, have you ever seen a time when the quality was poorer than it is today? And to think that the producers have reduced the number of pictures with the intention of raising quality by spending more money on each picture! And we haven't reached the bottom yet; watch July and August—you'll be surprised!

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WANT IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY!

A theatre has closed its doors in Philadelphia because of high film rentals—The New Ritz.

To the film companies, the closing down of The New Ritz is not important because it is a small house and a last run.

But to the people of the community that The New Ritz served its closing is important, for it was their theatre, and the prices it charged were what they could afford to pay.

To the owner of The New Ritz, too, its closing is important, because he now finds himself deprived of his means of making a livelihood.

The closing of The New Ritz should be of interest to every one of you who makes his livelihood operating a theatre, because the next one to suffer such a fate may be you.

An industry that counts its profits in millions and pays its executives sky-high salaries could not afford to keep The New Ritz open.

There are hundreds of New Ritzes throughout the nation. They are the "marginal" theatres of the motion picture industry—theatres that operate, through no fault of their own, always on the borderline between profit and loss. These theatres need all the "breaks" to eke out a mere existence.

Yes, there are "marginal" exhibitors, just as there are marginal farmers, and marginal oil diggers, and marginal producers of every sort. The government pours out annually millions of dollars to keep these small operators in business, for they are essential to the national economy.

The "marginal" exhibitor, because of showing late run pictures, which have a limited drawing power,—equivalent to the thin soil of the eroded farm—is asked to meet nationally formulated sales terms beyond his capacity to pay out of the intake.

No one helps the "marginal" exhibitor—not the government, nor the film companies, nor the organizations that are supposed to help him stay in business. As a matter of fact, the plight of the "marginal" exhibitor, because of conditions created by the war, has been aggravated by a greatly increased overhead—he has to pay higher wages to his employees, and everything he buys costs him a great deal more than in normal times. And to make matters even more burdensome, the "marginal" exhibitor, in many cases, finds

that his receipts have taken a dip as a result of shifts in population to defense areas, as well as of the fact that many of his regular patrons, now flush with prosperity, attend earlier runs, which charge higher admission prices. These conditions have created "draught" areas, where the closings will increase unless the distributors offer these exhibitors aid in the form of reduced film rentals.

The "marginal" theatres may be unimportant to the distributors economically, but they are important, not only to the communities they serve, but also to the entire nation, for they, too, sell bonds and war stamps; they, too, show War Activities subjects, promoting the war effort. But equally important is the role they play in their communities by furnishing the people with amusement. Moreover, these exhibitors keep their eyes on the local law-makers, and are an important factor in promoting good will for the industry. For all these reasons, the industry leaders should see to it that these theatres operate on a basis that will enable their owners to make a livelihood.

The plight of the "marginal" exhibitors is known to the heads of the film companies, and their branch managers know which of these cases need immediate aid. Such aid as has been offered in some of the cases has been so meager that the receivers have felt that it was an act of charity on the part of the distributors rather than an effort to correct their condition. And so the "marginal" exhibitors continue to be sacrificed to the fetish of the 40% film rental and to other burdensome conditions prescribed by the home offices. And the New Ritzes will continue to close down, because the sales heads refuse to recognize that the exhibitor has an overhead, and that pictures merit no higher allocations than such as will enable the exhibitor to cover, from what he takes in, his overhead and as will leave enough for him to make a living.

To the "marginal" exhibitor the question of whether pictures shall be sold in blocks of either five or twelve, or whether the cancellation privilege shall be either 10% or 20% is of lesser importance than that the few good pictures that are produced each year shall be sold to him at a price that will enable him to stay in business.

Here is a challenge to the heads of the industry—a challenge to their sense of fairness toward the "marginal" exhibitor,—the underdog.

KEEP SELLING BONDS — THEY'RE STILL FIGHTING OVER THERE

"Block Busters" with the East Side Kids*(Monogram, Sept. 16; time, 61 min.)*

A good addition to the "East Side Kids" series of program comedy-melodramas; it keeps one entertained throughout. The story is not particularly exciting or novel but it has some good human touches and plentiful comedy. The time the "Kids" match wits with a well-bred, young Frenchman, and the comedy is provoked by their efforts to teach him their way of life. As in the other pictures, the comedy is of the rowdy type, but one cannot help laughing at the "Kids'" pranks, particularly the antics of Huntz Hall. Leo Gorcey's misuse of the English language is additional cause for laughter:—

Learning the Minerva Urecal, a wealthy dowager, planned to rent an old house on the lower East Side so that her French-born grandson (Fred Pressel) will learn how American boys live, Leo Gorcey and his gang decide to discourage her by leading her to believe that the neighborhood was an unfit place for Pressel. The "Kids" stage a fight with a rival gang on the day Miss Urecal and Pressel arrive to examine the house. Pressel and Gorcey get into a fight and both are brought to Court, where the judge places them in the custody of each other, with the stipulation that neither must get into a fight. To keep his eye on Gorcey, Pressel becomes a member of the gang. He joins their baseball team when they teach him the game. Pressel, a handsome lad, attracts the girls of the neighborhood, and Gorcey has his hands full keeping the jealous members of the gang from fighting with him. Meanwhile Pressel becomes a proficient ball player and a favorite of the team's fans. The "Kids," angered by his popularity, decide not to let him play in the big game. The ninth inning of the game finds the "Kids" trailing their opponents. A local merchant offers to send the boys to the country if they win. Realizing that Bill Chaney, the team's sickly bat boy, would benefit greatly by such a vacation, Gorcey relents and allows Pressel to play. The young man hits a home run and wins the game.

Houston Branch wrote the story, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and Wallace Fox directed it. Barney Sarecky was associate producer. The cast includes Gabriel Dell, Billy Benedict, Harry Langdon, Roberta Smith, Noah Beery, Sr., and others.

Suitable for all.

"Leave It To the Irish" with James Dunn and Wanda McKay*(Monogram, August 5; time, 61 min.)*

Passable program fare. It is a breezy comedy-mystery melodrama, in which a private detective, aided by the police chief's daughter, rounds up a crime ring and solves a number of murders. There is nothing novel in the plot nor in the characterizations, but it offers enough fast action, excitement, and comedy, to hold the attention of non-discriminating audiences. Most of the comedy is provoked by James Dunn's troubles with the police chief, and the predicaments he gets himself into as he tries to divert suspicion from himself. The love interest is mildly romantic:—

Dunn, a private detective, is hired by Barbara Woodell to solve the murder of her husband, who had been a fur dealer. Barbara informs Dunn of a mysterious note she had received asking her to come to a night-club operated by Jack LaRue. Accompany-

ing her to the club, Dunn is warned by LaRue to steer clear of the case. Meanwhile Barbara receives a note from one of the waiters asking her to meet him at a shabby hotel. Dunn takes her to the hotel, only to find the waiter murdered. Frightened, Barbara asks Dunn to drop the case, but he determines to solve the murders. Wanda McKay, Dunn's sweetheart and daughter of police chief Arthur Loft, decides to help Dunn. Both investigate the dead fur dealer's warehouse, where they discover evidence that he had been dealing in stolen furs, and that LaRue had been associated with him. LaRue, learning that his racket had been found out, removes the evidence from the warehouse before Dunn returns to the scene with Wanda's father. Chided by the police chief for failing to prove his claim, Dunn determines to trap LaRue. He goes to LaRue's office. There he finds the gangster murdered, and is himself knocked unconscious by one of LaRue's henchmen. Later, Dunn finds himself suspected of the murder by the police. But he clears himself of the charge through a ballistic test, and manages to round up the gang and the stolen furs. He proves to the police that LaRue had murdered Barbara's husband because the fur dealer and one of his own henchmen were double-crossing him, and that the henchman, in turn, had murdered LaRue.

Tim Ryan and Edward M. Davis wrote the screen play, Lindsley Parsons produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. The cast includes Vince Barnett, Dick Purcell and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Black Magic" with Sidney Toler*(Monogram, August 19; time, 65 min.)*

This latest of the "Charlie Chan" murder mystery melodramas suffers from a weak script, but it will probably go over with the series followers. In spite of the fact that the murderer's identity is not revealed until the end, the story fails to hold one's interest because, throughout the proceedings, it does not make clear the motive each suspect might have had in the commission of the crime. The spectator learns of the motive at the finish, when "Chan" conveniently traps the murderer and explains his reasons for the crime. As a matter of fact, the story is no more than a hodge-podge of mysterious doings, none of which are logical, and all of which were obviously designed to give Sidney Toler, as the fabulous Chinese detective, an opportunity to display his amazing powers of deduction. For comedy, there are the usual situations in which a colored chauffeur (Manton Moreland) is frightened by skeletons and the like:—

On the eve of his first vacation in years, Charlie Chan is compelled to undertake the task of solving the murder of Dick Gordon, a psychic medium, because Frances Chan, his daughter, had been seated at the seance table in Gordon's studio when he had been shot. The police were baffled because neither the gun nor the bullet that killed Gordon could be found. Chan, aided by his daughter and Manton Moreland, his chauffeur, proceeds with the investigation and questions those who were present at the seance. While Chan discovers evidence proving that Gordon had been killed by a bullet made of poisoned frozen blood, two of the witnesses are murdered mysteriously. Satisfied that he had enough clues to trap the murderer, Chan holds a seance with the same persons in attendance and traps Frank Jacquet, a business man,

into admitting the killing because of a revenge motive. Chain explains that Jacquet had been horribly disfigured in an accident years previously, and that the murdered man had run off with Jacquet's wife (Jacqueline DeWitt). Jacquet, after having had his face rebuilt through plastic surgery, had hunted for the pair and had carried out his vow to kill Gordon. The murder solved, Chan and his daughter prepare to leave for their vacation.

George Callahan wrote the screen play, and Philip N. Krasne and James S. Burkett produced it. Phil Rosen directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"A Wave, A Wac & A Marine" with
Henny Youngman, Elyse Knox
and Sally Eilers**

(Monogram, Sept. 30; time, 80 min.)

Monogram has given this comedy, with some music, a better than average production, but it is wasted on mediocre material; at best, it is no better than ordinary program fare. The trouble with the picture is that it is too "talky," and a good deal of the dialogue, which is of the wise-cracking variety, is unintelligible because the players speak indistinctly and too fast. Most of the comedy situations are inane, and slapstick is often resorted to as the players strain to provoke laughs. This may amuse children, but adults will probably be bored by the ridiculousness of the whole thing. Henny Youngman, who makes his screen debut in this picture, is a fairly good comedian on the stage and on the radio, but on the screen his antics fail to amuse one; his acting is amateurish. The picture has its amusing spots, but there are not enough of them to lift the production above mediocrity. The title is misleading in that the story and the backgrounds are remotely concerned with the men and women of the armed forces:—

Henry Youngman, field representative for Sally Eiler's Hollywood agency, mistakes Elyse Knox and Anne Gillis, understudies, for Ramsay Ames and Marjorie Woodworth, the real stars of a Broadway show, and signs them to appear in pictures. He brings the girls to Hollywood, where Sally, furious at the blunder discharges him. Meanwhile Richard Lane, Sally's ex-husband and an actors' representative himself, signs Marjorie and Ramsay to a contract and turns them over to Sally, hoping that it will lead to a reconciliation with her. But Marjorie monopolizes Lane, causing Sally considerable annoyance. Meanwhile Henny manages to obtain a trial engagement for Anne and Elyse in a night-club, and he is shocked to learn that the girls neither sing nor dance. The girls, however, make a hit in a dramatic sketch. Alan Dinehart, a producer, signs them to a contract and announces that they will replace Marjorie and Ramsay as the stars of his forthcoming picture. Later, Dinehart finds himself in a predicament when Elyse joins the WAVES and Anne joins the WACS. And to add to his troubles, Marjorie and Ramsay demand that they be starred in accordance with their contract. Lane, who had joined the Marines, saves the situation by suggesting to Dinehart that he shoot the scenes of Elyse and Anne first, since they had two weeks before induction. Marjorie and Ramsay are mollified with the promise of starring roles in another picture, and Sally and Lane are reunited.

Hal Fimberg wrote the screen play, Sebastian Cristillo produced it, and Phil Karlstein directed it. The cast includes Charles (Red) Marshal, Cy Kendall, Connie Haines, Freddie Rich and his orchestra, and others. Unobjectionable morally.

**"Take It or Leave It" with Phil Baker
and Edward Ryan**

(20th Century-Fox, August; time, 71 min.)

A unique and thoroughly enjoyable musical entertainment, the sort that should go over with all types of audiences. Based on Phil Baker's "Take It or Leave It" radio quiz program, the story revolves around a youthful sailor who attends one of Baker's programs and is queried on the subject of "Scenes from Motion Picture Hits of the Past." This gives the producer an opportunity to flash on the screen outstanding musical comedy scenes from such pictures as "Lillian Russell," "One in a Million," "Tin Pan Alley" and other top musicals of past years. The players appearing in these scenes include Shirley Temple (at the age of five), Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Jack Oakie, Billy Gilbert, the Ritz Brothers, Tyrone Power, Borah Minnevitich's Harmonica Rascals, the Ink Spots, the Nicholas Brothers, Sonja Henie, Glenn Miller and his orchestra, George Montgomery, Buster Keaton and others. The story in itself is lightweight, but it has been developed in so amusing a fashion that it keeps one laughing throughout. As a matter of fact, the spectator enjoys the quiz game as he himself tries to answer the different queries, such as the names of the stars and the titles of the pictures from which the old scenes were taken:—

Learning that Marjorie Massow, his wife, was worried because her physician had been drafted, Edward Ryan, a sailor, attempts to secure the services of Dr. Roy Gordon, a noted obstetrician. Ryan is told that the doctor was too busy to accept another patient, but in order to dispel Marjorie's fears he assures her that he had concluded arrangements with Dr. Gordon. That evening Marjorie and Ryan, accompanied by Stanley Prager, his pal, attend Phil Baker's quiz show, and Ryan is selected as one of the contestants. Ryan selects as his subject "Scenes from Motion Picture Hits of the Past," and, with the help of Baker's pointed hints, wins the \$64 question. Baker asks him what he will do with the money, and Ryan explains that his wife was going to have a baby. When Baker asks him the name of his doctor, Ryan, to further assure Marjorie, mentions Dr. Gordon's name. Realizing that Gordon was a high-priced physician, Baker induces Ryan to continue with the contest, paying him \$64 for each correct answer. Marjorie becomes ill in the midst of the program, and Ryan's pal rushes her to a hospital. Ryan, confused and excited, admits to Baker that he did not engage Dr. Gordon. Baker, understanding his predicament, speaks into the microphone and exhorts Dr. Gordon, if he was listening, to rush to the hospital. The doctor, listening to the radio in a taxi, hears the plea and hurries there, but an interne delivers the baby before he arrives. He promises, however, to tell Marjorie that he delivered the baby, so that she would be happy in the thought that her husband did not let her down.

Harold Buchman, Snag Werris and Mac Benoff wrote the screen play, Bryan Foy produced it, and Benjamin Stoloff directed it. The cast includes Frank Jenks, Nana Bryant and others.

Has Theatre Television Arrived? — No. 2

(Continued from last week)

Before being able to determine whether or not to install a television equipment in your theatre, it is necessary that you take into consideration the following factors:

(1) Is your theatre so constructed as to enable the television engineers to install the equipment without extensive architectural alterations? If your projection booth is not large enough to take in the equipment, alterations must be made. How many seats will have to be removed so that the television picture, when projected, may clear the heads of the patrons? Will the picture be good enough to be satisfactory in the front rows of the orchestra? Is the floor where the equipment will be installed strong enough to support the added weight? Remember that the weight of the television equipment is considerable and you must be sure that no accident will happen after installation.

In the opinion of HARRISON'S REPORTS, no theatre is now constructed fully to meet the requirements of television projecting; alterations have to be made more or less in every theatre. As to the cost of these alterations, you will have to obtain it from an architect or contractor.

(2) How much will the television equipment cost?

Although theatre television has been demonstrated enough to prove its practicability, no figures as to the cost of the equipment are at present available. (Figures in the tens of thousands of dollars were mentioned before the war.) Nor can the equipment manufacturers give you even approximate figures at this time, by reason of the fact that the manufacture of television equipment will not be possible until after the war, and they cannot foresee at this time what the scale of wages for labor, and what the cost of the material, will be at that time. Besides, there will have to be considerable further experimentation, in the shop as well as in the theatre, before television is perfected. And the experiments cannot be conducted with full force until after the war. But there is no question in this writer's mind that the cost of the equipment will be quite high.

(3) Will the exhibitors be able to obtain the services of skilled television operators?

It is understood that some moving picture operator unions, feeling that television work comes under their jurisdiction, are planning to train projectionists in the use of television equipment. At present there are no technicians of this kind available.

(4) What will be the scale of their wages?

In view of the fact that the television equipment is far more complicated than the equipment for the projection of motion pictures, the television operator will require much greater technical knowledge than the average moving picture projectionist now possesses. Consequently, their wages will undoubtedly be much higher than the wages of the moving picture projectionist. If the film projectionist also projects the television pictures, he may ask for a corresponding wage increase.

(5) Now we come to another factor, one that is far more important than the factors so far discussed: From what source will the exhibitor be able to obtain his television entertainment?

At present there is no theatre television broadcasting, and it is doubtful if the home television broadcasters will permit the use of their programs by halls that charge an admission price. Besides, if these programs are copyrighted, as the case may be, the exhibitor may get himself into legal complications in the event that he used these programs without the broadcaster's authorization.

In cases where a program is sponsored by an advertiser, an arrangement with the sponsor as well as with the broadcasting station may be possible if the exhibitor would agree to televise, not only the program, but also the advertising part of it.

When the time comes, it is possible that there may be established stations that will send television programs directly to the theatres, on frequencies assigned only to theatre television, to reach the theatre by radio. The picture might

have greater detail and sharpness than the pictures that are now exhibited at home. At first, the picture will undoubtedly be in black and white, but as time goes on it may be in color. As a matter of fact, home television sets will, in the next ten or twenty years, probably be receiving their programs also in natural colors.

As said, the programs may be sent over by radio. There is, however, another way of transmitting a television program—over the wires. But ordinary telephone wires will not usually serve the purpose (except for short distances); the use of coaxial cables will be necessary. These are small flexible metal pipes through the center of which a wire is run. This wire is mounted on insulators, to keep it away from the outer shielding pipe.

The coaxial cables are capable of carrying television pictures without interference and have, from the point of view of the exhibitor, an advantage over radio transmission: anything that goes into the coaxial cable is private—it cannot be picked up except by those who are connected to the cables, whereas radio television can be picked up by any one owning a set, unless systems on unusual frequencies or with secrecy devices are employed.

The coaxial cables will, no doubt, be furnished by the Telephone Company on a rental basis. In all probability a proportionate part of this rental will be charged to the theatre, either separately, or included in the charge for the entire program.

Whether radio or cable is used to carry the programs to the theatres, however, it is clear that the programs must originate somewhere. They may originate, either in a studio, where live actors will be used, or in a projection room, by means of sound films, or in what are known as "mobile pickups." These are similar to newsreel pickups. For newsreels a cameraman with his camera and film, and sometimes a sound recorder is needed. For television it is necessary to have at least one cameraman with a television camera and a sound pick-up, these being sent to where an interesting event is to take place. Sometimes the event can be filmed simultaneously.

But, in the case of television, the outfit that is sent out for pick-up purposes is often and necessarily more elaborate: there are more than one cameraman with cameras and with control equipment. The cameras feed, either into a coaxial cable, or, more generally, into a television transmitter. The television transmitter sends the program to a receiving set at the central studio location, and there it is connected with the distributing system that carries it to the theatres. Thus the pictures and sounds of a baseball game, of the launching of a ship, or of any other either outdoor or indoor event can be picked up and carried instantly to each of the theatres served.

(Continued next week)

FIFTH WAR LOAN DRIVE EXTENDED

As most of you already know, the Treasury Department has requested the motion picture industry to continue its War Bond selling efforts throughout July because the financial needs of the Government have increased greatly due to the Normandy invasion and the great progress that is being made in the Pacific and all other battlefronts.

In view of this new development, R. J. O'Donnell, National "Fighting Fifth" Chairman, has made the following announcement:

"Instead of closing our records on July 8 as originally planned, we are now going to close them on July 27. Accordingly, the final report form will be sent to all participating exhibitors on or about July 20 to cover all Bonds sold from June 1 through July 27. All exhibitors are requested to keep their records in good order until the closing date and to mail them to the National Committee on the night of July 27, so that the entire drive can be cleaned up and a proper and complete report subsequently made to the industry and the Secretary of the Treasury."

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No. 30

Has Theatre Television Arrived?—No. 3

(Continued from last week)

Because of the fact that all the major film companies, with the exception of Warner Brothers, were caught "asleep at the switch" when sound came into the industry, some of these companies are now determined to keep up with television progress by establishing television subsidiaries.

The first company to set up a subsidiary has been Paramount—Television Productions.

At the annual meeting of the Paramount stockholders, held on June 20, Mr. Barney Balaban, president of Paramount, made the following remarks in his report to them:

"Much is being heard on all sides as to the place television will take in the post-war world. Paramount started studying this new method of communication soon after the present management came in. We looked over what was happening in this field both in the United States and in Europe and reached the conclusion that in television there exists an instrument which, when properly combined with entertainment values, could have at some time in the future a pronounced effect on the entertainment field.

"Paramount made some judicious investments in promising ventures, and put into operation television broadcasting stations in Chicago and Hollywood. Allen B. DuMont Laboratories, in which we have a substantial interest, has started operation of a station in New York City.

"It is, of course, impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy the future development of Television. It is too closely tied up with the science called 'electronics' and new discoveries in that field may change the outlook at any time. That this medium is a logical extension of our activities in more ways than one is indicated by the fact that sound pictures are also an electronic product. The DuMont Laboratories have become an important producer of complicated electronic equipment for the government for military and naval purposes.

"We have carefully studied the use of television as an adjunct to our theatres. We have an interest in Scopphony Corporation of America which has two of the most promising developments for obtaining large screen television which may be useful in theatres. We have developed practically instantaneous means of recording on film and showing in projectors the television pictures and sound which may be brought to our theatres by either radio or wire. It is probable that television will add to the attractions of the theatre."

From what Mr. Balaban reported to the Paramount stockholders, one cannot find out what Paramount has in mind as to the introduction of television into the motion picture industry, beyond saying that his company will make use of it in the Paramount theatres.

In order to obtain a clarification of Mr. Balaban's statement, I called on Mr. Paul Raibourn, president of Television Productions, the Paramount subsidiary, but the best that I could conclude from his statements was that he himself does not know what trend television will take. He said to me that they have entered this field in an exploratory way, stating that, if Paramount did not enter the field, some other com-

pany naturally would. So Paramount's taking up television will not, as he said, alter history. (These are not his exact words, but such is the meaning.) The only definite statement he made to me is that this company will install large television screens in Paramount theatres. He does not know at this time whether sponsored television advertising will play any part in their theatre television activities.

As I was leaving his office, I obtained a copy of the speech he made to the Radio Executives Club the day before.

When I arrived at my office I read this speech, and I may say that, beyond a considerable number of good jokes he "cracked," the speech contains nothing that would enlighten the industry, particularly the exhibitors. Perhaps his excuse is that he did not make that speech for the exhibitors. He did say, however, that "motion picture companies may make films for television and television may supplement feature film fare in theatre programs."

One more revelation he made in another part of his speech is that television can be used for advertising; also, "... it is possible that advertisers will be willing to put advertising on before their public in an amount which will correspond to these figures" (figures given in the first part of the paragraph). Perhaps this statement gives a pretty strong hint of what is in the mind of the Paramount executives in developing television.

One of the other major film companies to interest itself in television is, as you undoubtedly know by this time, RKO; it has set up the RKO Television Corporation, to make available "to the producers of television entertainment a complete program-building service."

On the third page of this Corporation's prospectus, there is the following statement, printed in red ink, apparently for emphasis:

"No single individual advertiser, no single advertising agency, nor any group of advertising agencies could possibly operate such enormous facilities as RKO and its subsidiary, Pathe News, Inc., now offer the potential television users of this country. These facilities are now available to both reputable advertisers and recognized advertising agencies through RKO Television Corporation. The same facilities make it possible for RKO Television Corporation to offer advertisers not only filmed television programs, but live-talent productions as well. . . ."

In an effort to have the RKO Television Corporation's advertising activities clarified, I called on Mr. Ralph B. Austrian, executive vice-president of the Corporation. I asked him whether his company's theatre television activities will include also sponsored advertising on the screens of the theatres owned either by RKO or by other film companies. He answered in the negative. I asked him also whether television shows for the home, produced by other film television companies, as well as his own company, would not tend to keep people away from the theatres, and he answered this question, too, in the negative. He did not think that any

(Continued on last page)

"Wing and a Prayer" with Don Ameche

(20th Century-Fox, August; time, 95 min.)

A good war melodrama. Combining fact and fiction, and played by an all-male cast, the story revolves around an unnamed United States airplane carrier and the important role it played in our country's naval strategy shortly after the Pearl Harbor disaster. The action is fast moving, exciting, and filled with suspense. Considerable footage is given over to life aboard the carrier, the manner in which the planes land and take off, the protective measures for crashes, and the methods with which attacks are repulsed—all this has been presented in a highly interesting fashion, without interfering with the story. Except for the aerial sequences, all the action takes place aboard the carrier, and for this reason the picture is different from most war melodramas, making its box-office chances favorable. There is some comedy to relieve the tension:—

Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the public was asking where our Navy was, Naval strategists in Washington, to give the Japanese Admirals the impression that our forces were weak, widely scattered, and unwilling to join battle, order Charles Bickford, Commander of Carrier X, to sail his ship to certain parts of the Pacific so that it could be spotted by the enemy. The orders explicitly stated that under no circumstances were the ship's planes to engage in combat with the Jap planes. They must run away. The effect of this order on the men was morale-breaking; they were compelled to stand by helplessly while attacking Jap Zeros shot down their buddies. The carrier's tactics, however, fool the enemy, who orders his fleet to sail towards Midway. The plan of strategy accomplished, Bickford explains it to his men and orders them to close combat and fight to win. The Battle of Midway takes place, and the Japanese Navy is dealt a severe blow.

The all-male cast includes Don Ameche, as the stern commandant in charge of flying operations; Dana Andrews, as the easy-going, soft-spoken squadron commander; and William Eythe, as the ex-movie star turned pilot—all give capable performances.

Jerome Cady wrote the screen play, and William A. Bacher and Walter Morosco produced it. Henry Hathaway directed it. Others in the cast include Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Kevin O'Shea, Richard Jaeckel, Henry Morgan, Richard Crane and others. Suitable for all.

"The Contender" with Buster Crabbe

(PRC, May 10; time, 66 min.)

There isn't a new twist in this often told tale of a prizefighter who allows success to go to his head, but it should get by as a supporting feature in small-town and neighborhood theatres. The story and treatment follow a beaten path; the hero is presented as an ingrate, forgetting his friends after gaining fame, forsaking the heroine for a pretty blonde (the promoter's girl-friend), and taking to drink and being beaten. In the end, of course, he becomes regenerated and his friends forgive him. There are the usual fight scenes, which should please the action fans:—

To satisfy his young son's desire to attend a military academy, where the tuition fees were beyond his means, Buster Crabbe, a truck driver, enters a boxing tournament in the hope of winning a \$500 prize. Milton Kibbee, a retired fight manager, sees in Crabbe the makings of a champion, and decides to train him. Aided by Kibbee's wise counsel, Crabbe wins the tournament and becomes a leading contender for the heavyweight crown. Arline Judge, a feminine sports writer, falls in love with Crabbe and becomes attached to Donald Mayo, his son, but Crabbe is attracted to Julie Gibson, a lady of loose morals. Success goes to Crabbe's head and he begins to lead a gay life, visiting night clubs, drinking, and keeping late hours. Despite his flagrant abuse of training rules, he manages to win bout after bout, but he ignores his obligations to his son and alienates his friends. His failure to pay the tuition fee compels Donald to leave military school. When he slaps the boy in a fit of temper, his friends, including his manager, leave him. Broke, Crabbe goes to Julie for financial aid, only to be told that she was through with him. Crabbe leaves town and, assuming a different name, continues his fighting career. But his life of dissipation has its effect and he is beaten badly in each fight. Arline and Kibbee finally locate him and make him see the error of his ways. He resolves to turn over a new leaf when Arline agrees to marry him and make a home for his son.

George Sayre, Jay Doten, and Raymond Shrock wrote the screen play, Bert Sternbach produced it, and Sam Newfield directed it. Unobjectionable morally.

"Mr. Winkle Goes to War" with Edward G. Robinson and Ruth Warwick

(Columbia, August 3; time, 77 min.)

A moderately entertaining comedy-drama, of program grade, centering around a 44-year-old, mild-mannered bank clerk, whose induction into the army gives him a long sought opportunity to change his way of life, both professionally and domestically. The story is just another variation of the "worm that turns" theme, containing little that is original, but it has enough amusing situations and human interest to make it a pleasing entertainment. Most of the action takes place against an army background, and much of the comedy is provoked by Edward G. Robinson's struggles with combat training. There is one battle sequence, on a South Pacific isle, which is quite thrilling:—

Robinson, a bank clerk for fourteen years and tired of it, resigns his position to open up a "fix-it" shop, where he could do odd jobs with the assistance of Ted Donaldson, an orphan, to whom he had become devoted. Ruth Warwick, his wife, objects to the resignation and demands that he either return to the bank or go live in the "fix-it" shop. Robinson chooses the latter. Soon after, Robinson receives a notice from his draft board and, despite his belief that he was physically unfit, passes the examination. He is inducted into the army and given a desk job. Weary of working at a desk, Robinson pleads with Richard Lane, his sergeant, to be made a regular soldier so that he could work with his hands. His request is granted, and though the basic training course saps his last ounce of strength, he doggedly refuses to quit. When the draft age is lowered to thirty-eight and he is offered an honorable discharge, Robinson elects to remain in the service so that he could accompany his buddies overseas. In the South Pacific, Robinson is sent to repair a bulldozer just as the Japs attack. He heads the bulldozer for a hidden enemy machine-gun nest and plows the Japs under. Wounded and honorably discharged, Robinson returns home a hero and, despite the honors heaped upon him, he remains his own quiet, unassuming self. He becomes reconciled with his wife, who, converted to his way of thinking, encourages him to resume business in the "fix-it" shop.

Waldo Salt, George Carey, and Louis Solomon wrote the screen play from the novel by Theodore Pratt. Jack Moss produced it, and Alfred E. Green directed it. The cast includes Bob Haymes, Robert Armstrong and others.

"Delinquent Daughters" with Fifi D'Orsay and Teala Loring

(PRC, June 15; time, 72 min.)

No better and no worse than most juvenile delinquency pictures that have been produced to date. Like the others, it suffers from a weak and unconvincing story, poor dialogue, and faulty direction. It follows a trite formula in its presentation of juvenile waywardness, depicting youngsters committing crimes and otherwise conducting themselves in immoral fashion. As usual, the blame is placed on the laxity of parents, and it resorts to ineffective preachment to put over its message. The industry has yet to produce an intelligent juvenile delinquency picture:—

Fifi D'Orsay, owner of a popular cafe frequented by 'teen-age youngsters, becomes jealous of the attentions Jon Dawson pays to Teala Loring, a high school girl who thought it smart to be tough. Under Dawson's tutelage, Teala, Jimmy Zaner, and Johnny Duncan had been leading a life of petty crime, snatching purses and holding up gas stations. June Carlson, an unsophisticated youngster seeking escape from her stern father, becomes innocently involved in one of the crimes when she accompanies Teala and Jimmy on an auto ride. In making their getaway, the car strikes and kills a pedestrian. The police trace the murder car to Fifi's cafe, but Dawson cleverly furnishes an alibi for the youngsters. Returning home at a late hour, June is ordered out by her father. She walks down to the docks where she meets Johnny, who had run away from his drunken father. Both decide to leave town and get married. But Police Lt. Joe Devlin apprehends the pair and takes them to the home of Judge Frank McGlynn. The judge summons their parents for a lecture, and all agree to turn over a new leaf. Meanwhile Dawson, Teal and Jimmy commit a payroll robbery, in which Jimmy is shot dead, and Dawson and Teala lose their lives when their escape car overturns. The Judge, aided by the police, turns Fifi's cafe into a respectable rendezvous for children.

Arthur St. Clair wrote the screen play. Donald C. McKean and Albert Herman produced it. Mr. Herman directed it. Not for children.

"Dragon Seed" with Katharine Hepburn and Walter Huston

(MGM, no release date set; time, 145 min.)

A powerful drama, magnificently and artistically produced; it will undoubtedly turn out to be an outstanding box-office success. Based on Pearl S. Buck's best-selling novel of the same title, it eloquently tells, through the medium of a typical Chinese farmer's family, of the savagery with which the Japanese descended upon China, and of the determination of the Chinese people to resist the invader at all costs. The action is suspenseful and grimly realistic in its depiction of Japanese wantonness and human suffering, and there are many situations that are so heart-rendering that one finds it difficult to control the tears. Not all the action is grim, however, for there are many moments of rich humor in the petty bickerings of the family, and there is an appealing romance. Despite the picture's unusual length, one's interest is held all the way through. The production is lavish, and the acting by the capable cast is flawless.

The action takes place during 1937 in a small village in China's interior, where Ling Tan (Walter Huston) works on his farm with his three sons, Lao Er (Tuhra Bey), Lao Ta (Robert Bice), and Lao San (Hurd Hatfield). Other members of the family include Jade (Katharine Hepburn), Lao Er's wife, who thirsts for the knowledge in books; Ling Tan's wife (Aline MacMahon), and Orchid (Frances Rafferty), Lao Ta's wife, and their two children. The peace and quiet of the village is violated by a flight of Japanese bombers that leave destruction and death in their wake. Thousands of refugees choke the road leading to Free China to fight the Japs from there. Jade and her husband, realizing that their country could not survive without freedom, join the march. Weeks later, Japanese troops enter the village and begin a program of pillage, marauding, and rape. Ling's farm is destroyed, and Orchid is violated and killed. Ling, his wife, and Orchid's children are left alone when Lao Ta and Lao San join the guerilla fighters. Months later, Jade, her husband, and their new baby return to the farm and find Ling and his wife suffering from starvation and pestilence. They learn that Orchid's children had died. The young couple organize the farmers into guerilla fighters to hamper the Japanese. Learning that Wu Lien (Akim Tamiroff), Ling's brother-in-law, had become a "Quisling," Jade goes to the village to visit him and manages to poison the food being prepared for a banquet. Wu Lien is shot for the deed as the Japanese officers die. Jade and her husband unsuccessfully try to convince the farmers to burn their homes and their crops, but Ling, realizing that he must destroy what he loves to make it useless to the Japs, sets fire to his farm. The others follow his example and join him on the trek to Free China, to till the soil and grow food for the Chinese defenders.

Marguerite Roberts and Jane Murfin wrote the screen play, and Pandro S. Berman produced it. Jack Conway and Harold S. Bucquet directed it. The cast includes J. Carroll Naish, Agnes Moorehead, Henry Travers, Robert Lewis, Jacqueline De Wit and others.

Since the scenes indicating rape are handled with delicacy, the picture is suitable for all.

"The Seventh Cross" with Spencer Tracy, Signe Hasso and Hume Cronyn

(MGM, no release date set; time, 111 min.)

This is an interest-holding, taut anti-Nazi drama. It is well produced, expertly acted, and even deeply emotional at times, but it is a cheerless entertainment, and for that reason it will have to depend upon the popularity of Spencer Tracy, and upon the fame of the best-seller novel from which it was adapted. The action takes place in Germany, during 1936, when those Germans who disagreed with the Nazi ideology were persecuted, and it revolves around a fugitive from a concentration camp and his efforts to evade capture by the Gestapo. Because of the interesting plot developments, the story holds one in suspense from beginning to end. Spencer Tracy does a creditable job as the fugitive who is chased, but high honors go to Hume Cronyn for his excellent portrayal of a mild-mannered German family man, who, though properly fearful of the Gestapo, risks his security to aid his friend. There is a brief romantic interlude:—

Tracy, an anti-Nazi German, and six other imprisoned liberals escape from a concentration camp. George Zucco, the camp's commandant, vows to capture them and to nail them to seven crosses erected in the prison yard to serve as an example to the other prisoners. One by one the men are caught by the Gestapo until only Tracy remains free and alive. Embittered and tortured almost to insensibility, Tracy makes his way across Germany, scarcely managing

to keep ahead of his pursuers. People he never met before, but who were sympathetic to his escape, aid him. He is bitterly disappointed when he reaches his home town and his former sweetheart, now married, refuses to help him. He makes his way to the apartment of Hume Cronyn, an old friend, who, with his wife (Jessica Tandy), offers to help him at great risk to themselves. Meanwhile Herbert Rudley, another old friend, tries to locate him and with the aid of Kurt Katch, an underground leader, succeeds in getting a passport and travel permit to him. They also arrange his passage to Holland. While waiting for the boat to sail, Tracy hides out at a waterfront inn where Signe Hasso, an underprivileged waitress, risks her life to protect him from the Gestapo. They fall in love, and he leaves her on a note of faith, eager to live and to pay back a debt to the people who had helped him.

Helen Deutsch wrote the screen play based upon the novel by Anna Seghers. Pandro S. Berman produced it, and Fred Zinnemann directed it. The cast includes Agnes Moorehead, Felix Bressart, Ray Collins, Alexander Granach, Steve Geray and others. Suitable for all.

"Since You Went Away" with Claudette Colbert, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, Shirley Temple, Monty Woolley and Robert Walker

(United Artists, no release date set; time, 171 min.)

In keeping with his reputation as a producer of outstanding motion pictures, David O. Selznick has made "Since You Went Away" into an impressive drama, offering entertainment that has something for every type of audience. It should particularly appeal to women, for it has deep human interest and there is much in it to make them weep. It is an episodic but stirring and inspiring tale of America's home front during the present conflict, told through the experiences of a mother and two daughters, who readjust themselves to a new mode of living when the head of the family goes to war. It is a story of hardships, heartbreaks, and sacrifices, of war-time romance and tragedy, and of courage, faith, and devotion. This is all developed in a realistic manner, and in such a way as to hold one's interest for most of its two hours and fifty-one minutes running time. It should be said, however, that the picture's length is unnecessarily excessive; the same story could be told well within two hours, without losing any of its effectiveness. Some judicious cutting would eliminate a number of lagging spots. The performances of the cast are uniformly excellent and the popularity of the players should in itself assure the picture's success. Many patrons will undoubtedly be disappointed to find that Lionel Barrymore, listed as one of the seven stars, appears for less than two minutes in a brief sequence as a clergyman. This sequence has the appearance of having been inserted to give the picture added name value. The direction is expert, and the production values are of the highest order. Being a Selznick picture, however, comparisons are in order, and it must be said that "Since You Went Away," though an excellent production, does not attain the epic-like qualities of "Gone With the Wind."

The story revolves around the "Hilton" family, composed of Claudette Colbert and her two daughters, Jennifer Jones and Shirley Temple. When Claudette's husband (who is never shown) enters the army, her daughters induce her to take in a boarder to help meet household expenses. They rent a room to Monty Woolley, a crotchety, retired army officer, and through him Jennifer meets and falls in love with Robert Walker, his grandson and an army private. Woolley disliked the boy because he had failed to make the grade at West Point. Notified that her husband was missing in action, Claudette and her daughters bravely cling to the hope that he will return safely. A tragic note is added when news comes of Walker's death on the battlefield. The spirits of the family are brightened by the occasional visits of Joseph Cotten, a Naval officer and old family friend. Stoically hiding their loneliness and despair, the family joins in the task of aiding the war effort. Claudette toils as a welder in a shipyard, Jennifer becomes a nurse and aids in the rehabilitation of wounded soldiers, and Shirley helps collect scrap metal and waste paper. Their courage and faith are rewarded on Christmas Eve, when Claudette learns that her husband was safe and homeward bound.

The story is by no means all tragic. There is considerable comedy in many of the situations, with most of the laughter being provoked by Monty Woolley's testiness, and by Joseph Cotten's flippancy.

Mr. Selznick wrote the screen play and produced it, and John Cromwell directed it. The cast includes Hattie McDaniel, Nazimova, Agnes Moorehead, and many others.

television show, picked up by the home television set, could keep any one away from theatres that showed good pictures.

Before leaving, I pointed out to him that, if every television company that would furnish television events to the theatres were to send a pick-up crew to the scene of an event, there would be duplication of effort and an unnecessary expense.

Instead of giving you the answer he gave me, let me reproduce a paragraph from a speech he made before the Television Seminar of the Radio Executives Club, on June 8, for the question is answered very clearly:

"The question has been asked: Who is going to supply the necessary pickup equipment and personnel to televise these events and carry them as far as the nearest coaxial cable connection? The broadcast chains or, let us call them telecasting chains, could perform this function but, if they do not desire to do so, the theatre group could well afford their own cooperative sets of pickup equipment and their own operating personnel would transport it to the scene of the event, just as sound newsreel cameras are today."

As a layman, I am a bit confused by Mr. Austrian's ideas as to how important events could be picked up by an outside television crew and relayed in some manner to the theatres. To begin with, the case of the newsreels are not analogous; the camera crews are sent out, not by the exhibitors, but by the distributors. Then again, the newsreels are put out by the distributors more for the advertising there is in it for their companies' names than for profit. And there is much duplication of effort and unnecessary expense, because each newsreel crew goes to the same scene of an important event. It is seldom that only one outfit is sent and the shots shared by all newsreels.

But most of my confusion comes from the fact that, though there will supposedly be several major film companies set up for the purpose of providing television entertainment for the theatres, the pick-up of television events is to be left to exhibitor groups, who know nothing about the technique of television. It does not seem logical. It seems to involve the exhibitors entering the business of production.

In his speech, Mr. Austrian made another statement that seems confusing. He said:

"Events of national and international importance would be shown by theatres of course without any extra charge. When our President speaks, naturally the exhibitor will include his image and his words as part of the program and schedule the rest of the show accordingly."

There are many obstacles in the carrying out of such an idea. To begin with, the President usually speaks from Washington. The television pick-up may or may not be able to send the President's image to New York, and certainly not to Chicago and to all points West, nor to many parts of the North, as well as of the South, for the simple reason that, at present, the television broadcast range is limited. A television image may be relayed, using methods available at present and by highly experienced operators, three hundred miles with certainty, five hundred miles probably but not with certainty, and one thousand miles with a prayer. Until television has progressed enough to relay television images from Coast to Coast, Mr. Austrian's prediction of having events of international, as well as of national, importance televised on the screens of all the theatres will remain only a dream.

Another obstacle to the exhibitor's carrying out his suggestion is the fact that, if an exhibitor whose theatre is in a rock-ribbed Republican community should announce that he will televise the President making a speech, he might just as well close down his theatre for the evening.

Even if political differences should not keep patrons away from a theatre, why should they go to a theatre to see and hear the President speak when they can stay within the comfort of their homes and do so, if they should happen to

have a television receiving set?—and in all probability most of them will!

Still another drawback is "timing." If the President should choose to speak at, for example, 10 P.M., the time he usually chooses for his talks to the nation, it would be 9 P.M., in the Central-Time Zone, 8 P.M., in the Mountain-Time Zone, and 7 P.M., in the Pacific-Time Zone. That certainly would give the exhibitors in each time zone a problem to solve, not to mention the problem the public will be confronted with, for between seven and eight o'clock is the dinner hour for the majority of the picture-goers.

Since distance and time are obstacles in the televising of an event, it may be necessary to take sound pictures of it, develop the negative, make positive prints and either ship them by air or by train to all the television stations located outside the television transmitting range. But by the time that the prints are received and then televised for the theatres, the event will be of not much greater interest to the picture-goer than it would be if he saw it in a newsreel. (Perhaps the President's speech could be distributed by television at 10 P.M., and simultaneously photographed and sound recorded. The quickly developed film might then be repeated one or two hours later over a nation-wide television network—but this is all far off.)

We have had an example of this in the case of the recent Republican Convention, in Chicago: Several thousand feet of the convention were taken with a sound camera; the first positive print was edited, the negative cut accordingly, positive prints were made and, by the time they were delivered to the telecasting stations in New York, Philadelphia and Schenectady, twenty hours had elapsed. Only television sets in and around Chicago were able to pick up the event directly from the Chicago television station.

And why should the exhibitor pay a large sum of money to buy, install and operate television equipment to project on his television screen events that have been relayed to him by the telecasting station from film, when he can show a newsreel of the same subject at a fraction of the cost?

(Continued next week)

"Men of the Sea" with an all-English cast

(PRC, April 30; time, 49 min.)

This is a slow-moving, British-made program drama, which, despite its short running time, is tedious all the way through. The story is trite and uninteresting; and most of the dialogue is difficult to understand because of the thick English accents. Moreover, none of the players are known to American audiences.

The story revolves around a Cornish sea-faring family, which had been bound to the sea for many generations. For years, the sea had taken its toll of the family, and the mother fretted lest she lose her husband and one remaining son. She persuades her son to settle down in a shop and marry his sweetheart, and induces her husband to give up the sea to grow cabbages. Everything goes well until war breaks out and the son decides to join the Navy as a wireless operator. The mother quarrels with him when she learns of his decision. Some time later, word is received that the son's ship had been sunk and that he was missing. The husband, despite his promise to quit the sea, volunteers to serve on a ship. Bitter at the loss of her son and her husband's refusal to remain at home, the mother loses her faith in God. But when the Admiralty reveals that her son is safe, she regains her faith and, realizing the true meaning of the war, gives her blessing to her husband as he leaves on his ship.

Manning Haynes wrote the story, James B. Sloan produced it, and Norman Walker directed it. The cast includes Wilfrid Lawson, Mary Jerrold, Kathleen O'Regan, William Freshman and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

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No. 31

Has Theatre Television Arrived?—No. 4'

(Continued from last week)

One other film company that has taken up television is the Hughes Tool Company, controlled by Howard Hughes. But since it is rumored that Mr. Hughes can hardly count the millions that he is making each year, a few millions lost or made in a television venture may not make any more impression on him than would the weight of a mosquito on the proboscis of an elephant.

An official of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has informed me that his company has given television deep thought, but it is not yet ready to announce what it intends to do.

A Universal executive has informed me that his company will not take up Television, and will be waiting eagerly for the television series of articles to appear in these columns.

An executive of Warner Bros. has informed me that his company's engineers are now making a study of television but have not yet concluded their findings. Consequently, they are not in a position to say just now what their course will be.

Twentieth Century-Fox has its engineers constantly studying the problem but its executives feel that the television picture is far from being as good as the motion picture, both from the technical and the entertaining point of view, and for that reason they are not going to do anything about it at present and perhaps for a long time to come.

United Artists is surveying the field but whether it will go into television or not depends, according to one of its top executives, on each of the partners.

Republic feels that television is competitive to motion pictures and it will do nothing about it other than to fight it as a competitor.

I requested the RCA Manufacturing Company of Camden, N. J., to be kind enough to send to New York City an engineer of theirs with whom I could have a talk in an effort to find out how much progress RCA has made in the theatre television field, so as to advise you accordingly.

One of their experts came to New York and our talk was very pleasant and enlightening. He assured me that RCA will make theatre television equipment as fast as material is released by the WPB for civilian use.

Keeping in mind the interests of the smaller exhibitors, I suggested to this expert that RCA should manufacture small equipment, moderately priced, compact and light, to be put on rollers, so that it could be rolled to the place of one of the projectors, which could, in turn, be rolled out of the way when television images are to be projected on the screen. This would make expensive architectural alterations in the theatre unnecessary. The most an exhibitor might have to do would be to have his projection room made a little longer so that the television equipment, when not in use, might be rolled out of the way.

The RCA expert liked the idea and promised me that he will submit it to his home office for consideration.

* * *

From what has already been said, it is easy enough to see that no exhibitor need go into a panic about theatre tele-

vision and rush wildly into this new entertainment field, for, to begin with, the art has not progressed to the point where he must have a television set or go out of business. After all, the question of whether he should or should not have a television equipment installed in his theatre is a matter of economics and not one of emotion, for him as well as his competitors. He must first figure out how much the equipment and its installation will cost, as well as its operation, maintenance, replacements and repairs, and, of course, the cost of the entertainment that will be furnished to him. After arriving at an approximate figure, he must then ask himself whether his seating capacity is enough to enable him to give the television entertainment profitably without raising his admission prices, and, if not, whether his patrons will stand a raise in the admission prices and, if so, what that raise should be. Then he must estimate whether the additional income will enable him to pay for the entertainment, for the operation of the equipment, for its maintenance, and for the amortization of the original cost.

But even if he came to fairly favorable conclusions after taking all costs into consideration, he has other problems to consider, pretty important in themselves. The first is, as said, the time element. This cannot be brushed off by the representative of a television program producer or of a television equipment manufacturer. You cannot stop in the middle of a picture to show a television event; many of your patrons may not stand for it. If you should stop the picture too often against their wishes, you may lose their patronage. And such a loss may be almost as much as the gain.

Then again, what will you do if a television event, instead of lasting twenty or thirty minutes, lasted only five minutes? Let us take as our example a prize fight: it may last ten rounds; on the other hand, it may last only one round. How are you going to cover the lost time? Will you rent an extra reel, or two reels, for an emergency? Wouldn't that add to your operating cost? This is an important item for small theatres.

But suppose people come to your theatre to see the television of an important event and paid an advanced admission price, and the event was cancelled the last minute: What are you going to do in such a case? Are you going to refund the extra charge? Imagine the trouble! (Cancellation of an event at the last minute has happened and can happen again.)

Suppose, again, that you are showing a top-rental picture and you are informed by the television company that an important event is to take place on one of the days of the engagement; will the film company make any concession to you for the extra cost of the event? Will it demand its share of the advanced admission price? Personally I doubt that any concession will be granted to you.

And how about jurisdictional fights among the labor unions? Such conflicts may arise from a dozen causes, none of which may be your own doing. One of such causes may be the scale of wages. Will the moving picture projectionists be willing to work for less than the television operators, even

(Continued on last page)

**"Mlle. Fifi" with Simone Simon,
John Emery and Kurt Kreuger**

(RKO, no release date set; time, 69 min.)

A rather slow but interesting program drama, with good production values. Based on two of Guy de Maupassant's patriotic stories, the action takes place in France, during the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, and the story revolves around a pretty French laundress, who puts love for her country above all. The picture draws a parallel with France's present-day predicament in that it depicts the brutality of Prussian occupation; the aristocrats' collaboration with the enemy and their efforts to escape the rigors of occupation; and the courage with which true Frenchmen and Frenchwomen stubbornly offer resistance. It has considerable human appeal, and one is sympathetic to the heroine who is subjected to cruel treatment by the aristocrats, and by a sadistic Prussian officer. There is no comedy to relieve the tension:—

Included in a group of passengers fleeing Rouen in a coach are three smug aristocratic couples, anxious to escape to England; John Emery, a patriot, whose courage was beginning to waver; and Simone Simon, a laundress, returning to her home in Cleresville. The aristocrats openly show their scorn for Simone when she professes her hatred for the Prussians. Halting overnight at an inn, the travelers are placed under the jurisdiction of Kurt Kreuger, a ruthless Prussian lieutenant, whom brother officers had nicknamed "Mlle. Fifi." Angered when Simone declines an invitation to dine with him, Kreuger forbids them all to leave. Simone's stubborn attitude keeps the group at the inn for several days until she succumbs to their pressure and agrees to dine with Kreuger. Simone learns that Kreuger had no desire for her other than a sadistic determination to make her follow Prussian orders. The following day, Simone is disillusioned when her fellow passengers shun her as though she were a wayward girl. Arriving in Cleresville, Simone is forced to join a party given by drunken German officers. There, she is subjected a second time to the demands of Kreuger. She stabs him fatally, and flees, Emory, whose courage had been restored by Simone's faith and conviction, helps her to escape. The town's church bell, which an aged priest had refused to ring to celebrate the Prussian victory, finally tolls as Kreuger's funeral cortege passes by.

Josef Mischel and Peter Ruric wrote the screen play, Val Lewton produced it, and Robert Wise directed it.

There are a few objectionable sex situations.

**"Three Little Sisters" with Mary Lee,
Ruth Terry and Cheryl Walker**

(Republic, release date not set; time 68 min.)

A fairly pleasant program comedy. The story, which is based on the deception theme, is routine and unfolds in an obvious manner, yet it should fit nicely in a double-feature bill. Most of the comedy is provoked by the predicaments three sisters get themselves into as they try to keep a soldier from learning that they were the poorest family in town, and that the sister he had fallen in love with, through correspondence, was a wheel-chair invalid. Several tuneful musical numbers have been worked into the story without retarding the action. The romantic leads are played by Cheryl Walker and William Terry, the love team of "Stage Door Canteen"; this fact, properly exploited, should prove beneficial at the box-office:—

Cheryl Walker, Ruth Terry, and Mary Lee, sisters, live in a small town where they earn a living washing clothes for the villagers. Cheryl, an invalid, had been corresponding with William Terry, a soldier, whom she had never met, and her letters to him, written by Mary, described her luxurious life in the town's Manor House, a vacant mansion owned by Charles Arnt, a skinflint. When Terry writes Cheryl that he is coming to town for a visit, the girls become panic-

stricken lest he learn the truth. Mary induces Jackie Moran, her boy-friend, who worked for Arnt, to give her the keys to the Manor. The girls move in before Terry's arrival, and Cheryl and Mary agree to switch identities during his visit. Mary is pleasantly surprised when Terry ignores her and devotes himself to Cheryl. Meanwhile Ruth finds herself attracted to Frank Jenks, Terry's buddy, and, to make conversation, mentions that she and her sisters planned to open a canteen in the Manor. When Jenks returns to camp, he mentions Ruth's plan to Colonel Addison Richards, who heartily endorses the idea and sends trucks full of soldiers and an army band. Arnt storms into the Manor at the height of the party and demands that the girls be arrested. The sisters explain the hoax to Terry, but he thinks nothing of it, having fallen in love with Cheryl. The soldiers begin to cheer Arnt, who, overjoyed to find himself popular, drops the charges against the girls; donates the Manor House as a permanent canteen; and offers to send Cheryl to a specialist so that she and Terry could dance on the veranda in the near future.

Olive Cooper wrote the screen play, Harry Grey produced it, and Joseph Santley directed it. The cast includes Milt Kibbee, Lillian Randolph, Forrest Taylor and others.

Suitable for all.

**"Bride By Mistake" with Laraine Day,
Alan Marshal and Marsha Hunt**

(RKO, no release date set; time, 81 min.)

A good romantic comedy. The story is not particularly novel or even logical; yet it holds one's attention, for it has been directed with skill and acted engagingly by a capable cast. The action revolves around a fabulously wealthy girl, who seeks a husband but wants to protect herself against fortune hunters. Many humorous complications arise when she falls in love with an aviator and puts him to the test by switching identities with her attractive secretary, a married woman, and even urges him to propose to her. Although the outcome is obvious, it does not detract from one's enjoyment of the picture, since the methods employed to bring about the final results are romantically amusing:—

To guard against fortune hunters, Laraine Day, a wealthy shipyard owner, averts newspaper publicity and has Marsha Hunt, her secretary-companion, impersonate her whenever she has to appear in public. Laraine's intimates favor the idea of her getting married, especially Edgar Buchanan, her guardian, and Allyn Joslyn, Marsha's husband, who wanted to settle down to a normal married life. At Marsha's suggestion, Buchanan arranges a tea party for a group of aviators stationed in a rest camp nearby Laraine's estate, so that Laraine, masquerading as Marsha, could meet some eligible men. Captain Alan Marshal attends the party, and Laraine finds herself attracted to him. Believing, however, that he has eyes only for Marsha and her supposed wealth, Laraine decides to test him. She arranges a week-end party at her beach house, and deliberately throws Marsha and Marshal together, much to the consternation of Joslyn. She even urges Marshal to propose marriage. Marsha becomes intoxicated and, forgetting her marital status, accepts his proposal. Laraine becomes dejected at having lost him. That night, Marshal is shocked to see Joslyn entering Marsha's bedroom. In the morning, he gives Joslyn a beating and insists that Laraine leave her "immoral" employer. When she refuses, Marshal carries her out of the house bodily, determined to protect her morals. They marry, and not until she tells him to look at her name on the license does he learn who she really is.

Phoebe and Henry Ephron wrote the screen play from an original story by Norman Krasna, Bert Granet produced it, and Richard Wallace directed it. The cast includes Slim Summerville, John Miljan and others.

There are no objectionable situations.

**"Music in Manhattan" with Anne Shirley,
Dennis Day and Phillip Terry**
(RKO, no release date set; time, 81 min.)

An entertaining comedy-farce with music, of program grade. The story is neither serious nor sensible, but it is gay, and offers considerable comedy, a pleasant romance, and a few very tuneful musical numbers, in which Anne Shirley and Dennis Day make a charming singing team. There are a number of amusing situations, fashioned along the lines of those found in bedroom farces, which should provoke hearty laughter. The action moves at a steady pace, and holds one's attention even though one knows in advance just how it will end. Charlie Barnet's orchestra and Nilo Menendez and his Rhumba Band furnish the music:—

Needing money to help save the musical show of which she was the star, Anne Shirley decides to go to Washington to ask her guardian for financial aid. Raymond Walburn, the show's musical director, obtains a plane reservation for Anne by informing the ticket clerk that she was the secret bride of Phillip Terry, a war hero, who was to be presented with the Congressional Medal. Newspapermen learn of the story, and Anne, unaware of the hoax, finds herself whisked to Terry's hotel suite when she arrives in Washington. Terry, who, too, was ignorant of the hoax, gallantly permits her to stay overnight because of the room shortage. Anne slips away in the morning and, after a disappointing interview with her guardian, returns to New York for the evening show. She is amazed to find the theatre packed, but soon learns the reason when she sees the headlines hailing her as Terry's bride. She does not deny the story lest the show fail and her co-workers lose their jobs. Terry, believing Anne had resorted to a cheap publicity trick, decides to embarrass her by moving into her apartment. Dennis Day, Anne's fiancé, vainly tries to eject him from the apartment. In the morning, the situation becomes complicated when Jane Darwell, Terry's mother, arrives at the apartment to meet her new "daughter-in-law," and to stay for a few days. By this time, Anne and Terry had fallen in love, but neither would admit it. To solve the problem, they decide to really get married and then to secure an annulment. But Terry's mother, believing they had an insignificant quarrel, tries to patch things up by telling Terry that Anne was going to have a baby. Blaming Dennis for the "deed," Terry gives him a beating and leaves on a war-bond tour. Anne, realizing he cared for her, tears up the annulment papers and joins him upon his return.

Lawrence Kimble wrote the screen play, and John H. Auer produced and directed it.

Morally unobjectionable.

**"Crime By Night" with Jerome Cowan
Jane Wyman and Faye Emerson**
(Warner Bros., Sept. 9; time, 73 min.)

A routine program murder-mystery melodrama, with an espionage angle. The story is somewhat far-fetched, but since the pace is fast and it has some comedy one's attention is held fairly well. Although an attempt is made to keep the audience guessing, the identity of the guilty persons becomes quite obvious early in the proceedings. The solving of the crimes follows the well-worn "Thin Man" pattern in which a suave detective and his pretty secretary track down the clues. The romantic interest is incidental:—

Jerome Cowan, a private detective, is retained by Stuart Crawford, a crippled musician, to defend him from being charged with the murder of his wealthy father-in-law, a chemical manufacturer. Crawford explains that he was sure to be the principal suspect, because he had often quarrelled violently with the dead man, whose daughter (Eleanor Parker) he had divorced. In one of these quarrels, the old man had hit him with an ax, causing the amputation of one hand. Aided by Jane Wyman, his secretary, Cowan's in-

vestigation brings him in contact with Creighton Hale, the dead man's secretary; Charles Lang, a singer at a local hotel and fiancé of Crawford's ex-wife; and Faye Emerson, a concert manager, who represented Lang. Cowan, after a careful search, learns that the dead man had developed an important chemical formula, needed in the prosecution of the war. He learns also that Lang had tried to obtain the formula through Eleanor. Lang, sensing that Cowan was closing in on him, attempts to kill the detective. He is arrested and put in the same cell with Faye's chauffeur, who had been jailed for drunkenness. The following morning, Lang is found dead. Cowan, suspicious of Faye, tricks her into attempting the murder of an important witness. He proves that Faye, posing as a concert manager, was actually the head of a saboteur ring, and that Lang and the chauffeur were her accomplices. The chauffeur had murdered Lang to keep him silent. Cowan proves also that Faye had engineered the chemical manufacturer's death, knowing that the son-in-law (Crawford) would be suspected.

Richard Weill and Joe Malone wrote the screen play, and William Clemens directed it. The cast includes Cy Kendall, Charles Wilson, Juanita Stark and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Abroad with Two Yanks" with
William Bendix, Dennis O'Keefe
and Helen Walker**

(United Artists, Aug. 4; time, 79 min.)

If your audiences want a change from the serious type of war melodramas that have been shown lately, they should find this fast-moving service comedy an amusing entertainment. The story, treatment, and characterizations are reminiscent of the "Flagg-Quirt" formula, in which two Marines, buddies, continually vie for the attentions of the same girl, who loves neither. The fact that the story is thin does not matter much, for there are plentiful gags—some old, others new, but mostly all comical even though they frequently resort to slapstick. The sequence in which William Bendix and Dennis O'Keefe, dressed in female clothes, chase each other at a charity bazaar, should provoke peals of laughter in well-filled theatres. The action is void of war scenes:—

Arriving at an Australian port for a furlough, William Bendix proudly boasts to Dennis O'Keefe, his buddy, that he had a letter of introduction to Helen Walker, a local young lady, given to him by John Loder, an Australian soldier, whose life he had saved. O'Keefe beats Bendix to Helen's home and, representing himself as Bendix, proceeds to tell her of the heroic rescue. Bendix arrives in the midst of the story and, to get even, tells Helen that O'Keefe was slightly insane. Deciding to capitalize on Bendix's statement, O'Keefe, impersonating an army doctor, telephones Helen and informs her that he (O'Keefe) was a psychopathic case whom she could help by humoring. Seeing that O'Keefe was getting the better of him with Helen, Bendix reveals to her the hoax; and in order to prevent O'Keefe from making further headway with her, Bendix sees to it that both he and his rival land in the guardhouse. To gain their release, both agree to act as chorus girls in the camp show. O'Keefe uses his feminine disguise as a means of escape, going to Helen's house where a charity bazaar was in progress. Bendix pursues him. Both get into a series of difficulties because of their female attire, and eventually locate Helen in the garden of her home. There, they hear her accept Loder's proposal of marriage. Both men manfully swallow their defeat and, as they leave, they are joined by a detail of military police who march them back to the guardhouse.

Charles Rogers, Wilkie Mahoney, and Ted Sills wrote the screen play, Edward Small produced it, and Allan Dwan directed it. The cast includes George Cleveland, John Abbott and others.

Morally unobjectionable.

though their technical knowledge is not as great as that of the latter?

There are still other problems, but one of the most serious is the fact that, as I see it now, you will have no control over the program that will be sent to you by the telecasting company. Many of these programs may cause ill feelings among a number of your patrons. For instance, if you were to show a prize fight in a strictly religious town, you may have an avalanche of protests, the kind that may mean a reduction in your receipts. If you were to show a horse race, you may have a worse fight on your hands. So, as you see, some of the programs may coin money for one exhibitor in one town, but ruin another exhibitor in a different town.

Though I have presented problems that many of you will undoubtedly be confronted with, I do not mean to discourage you from making a deep study of the television problems. Study television intelligently and determine for yourself whether it is necessary for you to install a television equipment, and, if so, whether it will be a profitable investment.

Personally I believe that television will ultimately be shown in theatres that will give television entertainment exclusively. But this is an opinion of my own. As television is developed, it may prove wrong; or it may prove right.

You will be interested to know, I am sure, that the Society of Motion Picture Engineers is studying the problem carefully. The Television Projection Practice Sub-Committee, a part of the Theatre Engineering Committee of that Society, is actively engaged in the study of the field under the chairmanship of Mr. Lester Isaac, Supervisor of Projection of Loew's, Inc. The recommendations of this Sub-Committee will undoubtedly be of great help to all exhibitors, as were the reports of the Projection Practice Sub-Committee when it dealt with film projection and the specifications for proper projection rooms.

As new information on this subject becomes available, HARRISON'S REPORTS will print it so as to keep you acquainted with the progress of television insofar as it affects the operation of motion picture theatres. We shall also present shortly a set of special television topics of interest to you, under classified headings.

THE END

"Janie" with Joyce Reynolds Edward Arnold and Ann Harding (Warner Bros., Sept. 2; time, 101 min.)

Based on Brock Pemberton's successful Broadway stage play, of the same title, this is a pleasantly amusing comedy, with a particular appeal for adolescents. The younger generation should find it to their liking, for most of the action revolves around teen-aged youngsters, and it sets forth, in a humorous vein, the problems that beset a high school miss, when the army establishes a base near her home town and she forsakes her local beau for a handsome young soldier. It is a well-acted, well-produced picture that moves at high speed and has a number of highly amusing situations, but it lacks originality. As a matter of fact, one might class the production as a female "Henry Aldrich" picture, but with better production values. Joyce Reynolds, a newcomer, gives a bright performance as "Janie," and Clare Foley, an eight-year-old youngster, is excellent as "Janie's" sister, a role she enacted in the stage play. Her malicious interference in "Janie's" affairs, and the price she sets on her nuisance value, furnish some of the picture's brightest spots. Additional comedy is provoked by a middle-aged romance between Robert Benchley, as a debonair bachelor, and Barbara Brown, as a gay widow. The fame of the stage play may be of considerable help at the box-office:—

When the army establishes a base near Hortonville, newspaper publisher Edward Arnold writes an editorial warning of the pitfalls facing the town's girls. Joyce Reynolds, his sixteen-year-old daughter, remains loyal to her high school sweetheart (Richard Erdman) until Robert Hutton, a nineteen-year-old private, comes to town. Joyce is fascinated by Hutton's uniform and Yale polish, but does not know what to do about Erdman. The bitter rivalry between the two

boys gets her into many difficulties. Learning that her mother (Ann Harding) and father were to attend a party, and that the house would be empty of adults, Joyce plans to spend a quiet evening at home with Hutton and two of her girl-friends, who, too, had soldier beaux. Jealous, Erdman notifies the soldiers in town that Joyce was holding open house for all men off duty. The soldiers begin to arrive at Joyce's home in groups and squads and before long a riotous party is in full swing. The noise arouses the neighbors, who call the police — military and civilian—to restore the peace. The police arrive simultaneously with Joyce's parents and the commander of the army camp. A quarrel ensues when Arnold surveys the damage to his home, but Joyce restores amity when she informs the commandant that the party was clean fun and that his men had behaved like gentlemen. The following day, Joyce and her girl-friends are wet-eyed as the soldiers depart on a troop train, but their eager young eyes turn with dawning expectancy when another train enters the station loaded with Marines.

Agnes Christine Johnston and Charles Hoffman wrote the screen play from the play by Josephine Benthall and Herschel V. Williams, Jr. Alex Gottlieb produced it, and Michael Curtiz directed it. The cast includes Alan Hale, Hattie McDaniel, Russell Hicks and others.

Suitable for all.

"The Falcon in Mexico" with Tom Conway and Mona Maris

(RKO, no release date set; time, 70 min.)

Typical in story development and production values to the other pictures in the series, "The Falcon in Mexico" offers fairly good program entertainment for the followers of murder-mystery melodramas. It holds one in suspense because of the danger to Tom Conway, who gives his usual good performance as the suave private detective; and since the murderer's identity is not revealed until the end, it keeps one guessing. Most all the action takes place in Mexico, and the backgrounds and customs give the picture an interesting touch. There is some comedy, but no romance:—

Passing an art gallery late one evening, Conway comes upon Cecilia Callejo, a Mexican girl, trying to force the door. He offers to help her when she explains that she was after a portrait of herself. Inside, Conway finds the gallery owner murdered just as the police arrive. Cecilia vanishes, and Conway finds himself accused of the murder. An examination of the painting discloses that it was a recent portrait of Cecilia, and a tag indicated that it had been sold to Emory Parnell, an art collector, and that it had been painted by Bryant Washburn, who had presumably died fifteen years previously. Interested in how the dead man could have painted a recent portrait, Conway escapes the police. After learning that Parnell had a large collection of Washburn's paintings, Conway contacts Martha MacVicar, Washburn's daughter, who informs him of her belief that her father was alive in Mexico. She persuades Conway to take her there. In Mexico City, Conway goes to an inn where Washburn had his studio, and there meets Mary Currier, the inn keeper, who had been in love with Washburn. He meets also, Mona Maris and Joseph Vitale, dancers, who were married. Mona was Washburn's widow. Conway becomes embroiled in many mysterious happenings as he tries to learn if Washburn is still alive. He is threatened by Mona, who feared lest she be branded a bigamist; Cecilia is murdered mysteriously; an attempt is made on Martha's life; and Parnell hounds him for the return of Cecilia's portrait. Washburn eventually reveals himself to Martha, explaining that he pretended to be dead so that she would benefit from the insurance money. As they speak, Washburn is mysteriously shot dead. Conway traps Parnell as the murderer, and proves that he had committed the crimes because his collection of paintings would have been valueless if Washburn were alive.

George W. Yates and Gerald Geraghty wrote the screen play, Maurice Geraghty produced it, and William Berke directed it. The cast includes Nestor Paiva and others.

Morally unobjectionable.

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 1944

No. 32

A Newfangled Sales Policy That Should Be Rejected

The announcement by United Artists that David Selznick's "Since You Went Away" will be sold under a policy that will require the exhibitor to increase his existing admission price by 50% has raised the ire of exhibitors everywhere—and rightfully so.

To begin with, the adoption of such a policy comes at a most unpropitious time for now, more than ever, the exhibitor is beginning to feel—through his box-office—the indignation of his patrons, who are protesting vehemently against the practice of making them pay a premium for every so-called quality picture, but offering them no rebate on the "duds." And the unfortunate part of it all is that the exhibitor, through no fault of his own, finds the resentment levelled against him, for few of his patrons realize that the higher admission price is set by the producer-distributor as a condition of licensing the picture.

Much has been written in these columns and in other trade papers about the fallacy of "juggling" admission prices because of the breach it causes in the relationship between the exhibitor and his patrons. Nevertheless, in recent months, when a producer made a picture, which he believed to be slightly above average quality, the exhibitor was given an ultimatum to raise his admission prices. And along with raised admission prices goes the equally objectionable increased rentals.

It will be recalled that the first picture to be sold on a 70% basis was Selznick's "Gone With The Wind." When the exhibitors agreed to pay such a high percentage of their receipts for a picture, they helped establish a precedent. Immediately, other producer-distributors demanded 70% for their pictures. They produced pictures, which, in their opinion, were on a par with "Gone With The Wind," and if Selznick could get 70%, so could they.

Now comes Selznick with a new advanced admission price policy, which, if accepted by the exhibitors, will establish another precedent that may cause them no end of headaches, for without a doubt the other producer-distributors will again maintain that, if Selznick can "get away with it," so can they.

In a recent bulletin, Allied States Association points out that, "heretofore when a producer has wanted to force increased admission prices he has first offered his opus for showing at advanced admissions (usually a fixed amount for all theatres) and then has retired the picture for a year before offering it to the theatres for exhibition at regular prices. This enabled exhibitors who felt they could not or should not boost their prices to postpone the playing of the picture. In some cases it developed, in the meantime, that the picture was not so hot and they did not play it at all.

"Now United Artists has devised a new scheme which includes all the benefits to the distributor of the old scheme, abolishes fixed uniform prices, poses a 'now or never' problem for the exhibitor, and gyps the public just as effectively. United Artists says, in effect, that the exhibitors in order to get the picture on their regular availability must increase their admission, not to a uniform figure, such as 50c, 75c, or \$1.00, but by 50% of their established admissions. This will preserve the variations between theatres having different basic price scales, but the public gets soaked just the same.

"All emphasis is on playing the picture while it is hot; no 'cooling time' in which to find out whether the picture is really as good as the producer claims it to be."

Why has United Artists, at the apparent insistence of Selznick, deviated from the accepted form of advanced price treatment—the roadshow? The answer is, in the opinion of this writer, that "Since You Went Away," though a good picture and an outstanding box-office attraction because of its all-star cast, is a grossly overrated production, deliberately lengthened, which Selznick, on the basis of his reputation and with the aid of a high-powered publicity campaign, is trying to sell to the exhibitors and to the public as a picture of epic proportions. But he does not dare to exhibit it on a roadshow basis lest it meet with the dubious success of other pictures roadshown recently, thus giving the exhibitors an opportunity to size up the production for what it really is, and enabling them to resist excessive rental demands.

In explaining the policy, United Artists issued the following statement:

"It is the belief of the producer and the distributor that the policy of a fixed admission price required from all theatres regardless of their sequence of runs does not fit 'Since You Went Away,' as the policy of a fixed roadshow admission price would thwart the desire of David O. Selznick to have his picture shown to the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time. . . ."

If Selznick is so eager to show his picture "to the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time," by what line of reasoning does he conclude that he can crowd more people into the theatres by charging higher admission prices? Perhaps he has discovered some new theory of either economics or mathematics.

Let us be practical about this: The selling policy of "Since You Went Away" has but one purpose—to avoid the possibility of a failure on a roadshow basis, and yet to compel the exhibitor to accept the picture on an advanced admission price basis under threat that, should he fail to book it, his competitor, with a later run, will get the picture, thus causing a loss of prestige to his theatre.

Surely, if "Since You Went Away" is the outstanding picture it is heralded to be—one that has mass appeal, Selznick should feel securely confident that he will get a fair return on his investment by allowing the public to see the picture at regular admission prices. The record shows that "Mrs. Miniver," which MGM sold at regular admissions in order that it might be seen by the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time, was one of the greatest box-office attractions of all time. Then again there is "Going My Way," another outstanding picture presently making the rounds at regular prices; according to reports, this picture should gross for Paramount between five and seven million dollars.

It is high time that the exhibitors resisted the ever-increasing demands of the producer-distributors who refuse to recognize that there is a saturation point to the rental an exhibitor can pay for a picture, and to the admission price he can charge to his patrons. Perhaps, with enough exhibitor opposition, the producer-distributors can be made to

(Continued on last page)

"Barbary Coast Gent" with Wallace Beery and Binnie Barnes

(MGM, no release date set; time, 87 min.)

A moderately entertaining western-like melodrama. Though there is more talk than action, it should prove satisfying to the Wallace Beery fans. Beery is presented as a swindler, who thinks nothing of duping men out of money. True, he eventually changes his ways and becomes a sort of Robin Hood to protect investors in a legitimate mining venture, but the moral effect of the story is bad, even though it is handled in a humorous vein. The story is set in 1880 against the background of a booming Western town. It has some good comedy situations and several exciting shooting frays. It has also some very dull spots:—

Beery, a bunco artist on San Francisco's Barbary Coast, is compelled to leave town when he shoots John Carradine, a crooked gambler, in a shooting quarrel. Binnie Barnes, Beery's girl-friend and owner of a gambling palace, takes him to the railroad station. On the train, Beery boldly forces his way into the private car of Donald Meek, president of the railroad. At Gold Town, Nevada, Meek allows Beery to substitute for him in making a speech to the townspeople. They believe him to be Meek's close associate, and invite him to spend a few days in town. Representing himself as a financier, Beery attempts to sell worthless stocks, but Meek's grandson (Bruce Kellogg), a local newspaperman, stops him under threat of exposure. Beery, as a distinguished visitor, lays the corner stone for the town's new jail and discovers that the stone was gold ore. He locates the source of the stone, stakes out a claim and, with Kellogg's aid, sells stock to the townsmen in a legitimate venture to develop the mine. Meanwhile Carradine arrives in town. He finds Beery unarmed, and steals the investors' money. Instead of leaving town, Beery robs stage coaches to finance the development of the mine. He manages to escape detection, and even joins the townsmen in their search for the "mysterious" bandit. Suspicion is turned on Beery when a handkerchief he had dropped during one of the holdups is identified as his. But before he can be arrested, Beery gets into a shooting fray with Carradine, who had returned to blackmail him. Carradine is killed and Beery wounded. The true story of the robberies come to light, and when Beery recovers, he is escorted to the jail by a brass band. Binnie, who had come to his aid, promises to wait for him.

William R. Lipman, Grant Garrett, and Harry Ruskin wrote the screen play, O. O. Dull produced it, and Roy Del Ruth directed it. The cast includes Frances Rafferty, Chill Wills, Noah Beery, Sr., Henry O'Neill, Ray Collins, Louise Beavers and others.

"Heavenly Days" with Fibber McGee and Molly

(RKO, no release date set; time, 72 min.)

Good program entertainment; it should please, not only the Fibber McGee and Molly fans, but also other members of the family, for the picture has a wholesome quality. The story, which is a lightweight affair but quite adequate for this radio team's brand of humor, concerns their misadventures when Fibber decides to go to Washington to help Molly's cousin with a post war government project. Without lessening the story's humor, the picture has a message in that it points out the failure of the "average man" to exercise his duties as a citizen and to acquaint himself with the issues facing his government. One is kept chuckling throughout by the gags and by the predicaments Fibber gets himself into, particularly the sequence in which he violates the rules for visitors and attempts to address the Senate. Raymond Walburn, as a local politician, and Eugene Pallette, as a bombastic U. S. Senator, add much to the fun:—

Fibber McGee (Jim Jordan) accepts an invitation from Charles Trowbridge, his wife's wealthy cousin, to come to Washington to assist him on a post war plan. En route, Fibber and Molly (Marian Jordan) meet Dr. Gallup (Don

Douglas) and sell him the idea of conducting a national poll to find America's "average man." Arriving in Washington, the couple find a note from Trowbridge asking them to make themselves comfortable in his home until he returns from out of town. They meet Senator Eugene Pallette, Trowbridge's close friend, and manage to get a pass from him to visit the Senate. Believing that he had the right as an American citizen to voice his views, Fibber interrupts a debate and attempts to address the Senators. He is led from the gallery, causing no end of embarrassment to Pallette, who reports the incident to Trowbridge upon his return to Washington. The newspapers publicize the incident, gaining national fame for Fibber. But Trowbridge, peeved because Pallette had been embarrassed, asks Fibber and Molly to return home. Arriving in Wistful Vista, Fibber is met by a huge delegation headed by Dr. Gallup, who presents him with a loving cup in honor of his having been selected as America's "average man." Fibber, believing himself to be better than average, discards the cup. Learning that it was election day, Fibber hurries to cast his vote, but the right to vote is denied to him because of his failure to register. Realizing that his neglect was typical of the "average man," Fibber retrieves the loving cup.

Howard Estabrook and Don Quinn wrote the screen play, and Robert Fellows produced it. Mr. Estabrook directed it. The cast includes Gordon Oliver, Barbara Hale, Frieda Inescort and others.

Suitable for all.

"Sweet and Low-down" with Benny Goodman, Jack Oakie, Linda Darnell and Lynn Bari

(20th Century-Fox, September; time, 75 min.)

Fair program entertainment, with better than average box-office possibilities because of the popularity of Benny Goodman and his orchestra. Its chief appeal, however, will be to the younger set and others who find "jive" music pleasurable. There is not much freshness in the story, which is somewhat biographical of Goodman, and concerns his giving a "break" to a talented young trombonist, who allows success to go to his head; but since it has comedy, romance, and plentiful musical numbers, the picture keeps one entertained:—

After finishing his annual free concert at Chicago's Dearborn Settlement House, Benny Goodman is accosted by Buddy Swan, a young boy, who tricks him into following him home to hear his brother (James Cardwell) play the trombone. Goodman, impressed by Cardwell's playing, offers him a job. The young man grasps the opportunity to better the lot of his widowed mother. Under Goodman's tutelage, Cardwell becomes a noted trombonist. Lynn Bari, singer with the band, finds herself attracted to Cardwell, but the young man meets and falls in love with Linda Darnell, a charming socialite. Meanwhile Allyn Joslyn, Lynn's agent, becomes peeved at Goodman, because of his refusal to raise Lynn's salary. To retaliate, Joslyn tries to induce Cardwell to form his own band, with Lynn as vocalist. A misunderstanding with Goodman, and a quarrel with Linda, cause Cardwell to accept Joslyn's offer. Against the advice of Jack Oakie, his roommate, Cardwell persuades the other members of the band to leave Goodman and form a cooperative band of their own. The venture proves unsuccessful, and the band members, realizing that they lacked proper leadership, return to Goodman. Cardwell, broken, returns to his old job in a Chicago factory. Months later, when Goodman's orchestra arrives in Chicago for its annual concert at the Settlement House, Oakie forcibly brings Cardwell to the concert, where he effects a reconciliation with both Goodman and Linda, and resumes his position with the band.

Richard English wrote the screen play, William LeBaron produced it, and Archie Mayo directed it. The cast includes Dickie Moore, Dorothy Vaughan and others.

Suitable for all.

"Casanova Brown" with Gary Cooper and Teresa Wright

(RKO, no release date set; time, 93 min.)

First of International's pictures to be released through RKO, this is a thoroughly entertaining romantic comedy-farce, the sort that should appeal to every type of audience. Based on "Little Accident," the Broadway stage play by Floyd Dell and Thomas Mitchell, the story revolves around a shy, small-town young man, who, on the eve of his wedding, learns that his former wife—a marriage his future bride had no knowledge of—had given birth to a baby. Gary Cooper, as the confused bridegroom and inexperienced father, is exceptionally good. His kidnapping of the baby girl lest it be offered for adoption, and his struggle to give her proper care in a hotel room, result in situations that are hilariously funny. Additional laughter is provoked by the antics of Frank Morgan, as the irascible father of Cooper's prospective bride. Despite the story's farcical nature and, at times, far-fetched situations, it has many heart-warming moments and a tender romance. Nunnally Johnson, who wrote the amusing screen play and produced it, and Sam Wood, who directed it, have handled the production with skill and intelligence:—

On the eve of his marriage to Anita Louise, Gary Cooper receives a letter from a Chicago maternity hospital, requesting that he come there on a matter of importance. Disconcerted, Cooper confides in Frank Morgan, Anita's father, and informs him that, months previously, he had met Teresa Wright in New York and had married her after a whirlwind courtship. But her wealthy parents had disapproved of the marriage, and he had agreed to an annulment after three days of wedded bliss. Cooper rushes to Chicago, where he learns that Teresa had given birth to a baby girl. Teresa, as a means of effecting a reconciliation with Cooper, tells him that she intends to offer the baby for adoption. Lest she carry out her plan, Cooper disguises himself as a physician, kidnaps the baby, and takes it to an obscure Chicago hotel room, which he sets up as a combination nursery and laboratory. Mary Treen, a chambermaid, and Emory Parnell, a bellhop, help him care for the child. Sent to the hospital to obtain a correct feeding formula, the dim-witted bellhop reveals Cooper's hiding place. Realizing that he would soon be apprehended, Cooper decides that the child could not be taken from him if it had a mother. He proposes marriage to the chambermaid, who accepts him. Both rush to the marriage bureau. Returning to the hotel, Cooper finds Anita and Teresa waiting for him. He tries to elude them, but Teresa finds him when she hears the baby cry. Teresa's happiness is complete when Cooper informs her that he is free to remarry her; he did not wed the chambermaid, because a Chicago marriage law required a three-days waiting period.

The cast includes Patricia Collinge, Jill Esmond, Isobel Elsom and others.

The story was produced originally in 1930 by Universal, under the title, "Little Accident." Considerable story changes have been made for this version, which is by far superior.

"Atlantic City" with Constance Moore, Brad Taylor and Charles Grapewin

(Republic, no release date; time, 86 min.)

A good musical entertainment, produced on a fairly lavish scale. In spite of the fact that the backstage story and its treatment follow a time-worn pattern, the picture holds one's interest all the way through because of its colorful depiction of Atlantic City's development as the "playground of America" during the period between 1915 and 1922. Musically, the picture is highly satisfactory, for it brings back a number of old, favorite melodies, many of which will delight the older folks. Woven into the story are specialty numbers by such well-known vaudevillians as Belle Baker; Joe Frisco; Al Shean, who does his old "Gallagher and Shean" routine;

Gun Van, of the famous "Van and Schenck" team; and Buck and Bubbles. Appearing briefly in a few lavish production numbers are the orchestras of Paul Whiteman and Louis Armstrong, whose popularity should register at the box-office. Constance Moore's singing, and Jerry Colonna's comedy antics, add much to the picture's entertainment values:—

Brad Taylor, an ambitious young promoter, envisions Atlantic City as the play-ground of America and sets about to make it so. He acquires control of the Garden Pier Theatre and stages a lavish musical revue starring Constance Moore, his girl-friend. The show is a smash hit, and Constance and Brad marry. Brad's aggressiveness makes him a highly successful promoter, but his ruthless methods cause him and Constance to become socially ostracized. Moreover, his neglect of Constance made her unhappy. His father, Charles Grapewin, an old vaudevillian, warns Brad that love and friends are more important than success. Eventually, Constance leaves him and accepts a starring role in a Broadway show. World War I temporarily halts Brad's career. Upon his return, he decides to crown his achievements by the erection of a huge amusement pier. Brad goes broke when the pier is destroyed by fire, without insurance coverage, and the banks refuse to extend him credit. But Constance and his father come to his aid by rallying their Broadway friends and staging a spectacular musical revue. His fortune recouped, Brad institutes the Atlantic City Bathing Beauty Pageant and settles down to a happy life with Constance.

Doris Gilbert, Frank Gill, Jr., and George Carleton Brown wrote the screen play, Albert J. Cohen produced it, and Ray McCarey directed it.

Suitable for all.

"Shadows in the Night" with Warner Baxter, Nina Foch and George Zucco

(Columbia, July 27; time, 67 min.)

This latest of the "Crime Doctor" series of program mystery melodramas is handicapped by a weak script, but it has enough mysterious happenings and eerie doings to satisfy the ardent followers of this type of entertainment. The treatment follows the well-worn formula of casting suspicion on several persons, with the murderer's identity held in abeyance until the final reel. Warner Baxter enacts again the role of "Dr. Ordway," the criminologist who solves crimes through psychology, giving his usual good performance. In its favor is the fact that the story is based on the popular "Crime Doctor" radio program:—

Baxter is visited by Nina Foch, who informs him that she had been having a series of nightmares in which she had seen a ghostly figure that tried to persuade her to jump into the ocean fronting her home. Baxter agrees to investigate. At Nina's home, he meets Jeanne Bates and Lester Matthews, Nina's sister and brother-in-law; Edward Norris, junior partner of a textile firm for which Nina was a designer; and George Zucco, Nina's eccentric uncle, who was secretly experimenting with chemicals for the manufacture of a new textile. Baxter takes Nina's place in her bedroom. Soon after midnight, Baxter is dazed by the appearance of a ghost and follows it to the water's edge, but a fall to the rocks brings him to. He realizes that the ghost was a living person, who had used a gas to hypnotize him. Returning to the house, he finds a dead body, but before he can have it identified the body disappears. He finds the body the next morning in a cave and learns that it was Nina's employer. A quick succession of clues helps Baxter to trap Matthews as the murderer. Baxter proves that he had been posing as a ghost to drive Nina mad so that she could not testify against him at a coming law suit. Matthews attempts to flee, but he is shot and captured by the police.

Eric Taylor wrote the screen play, Rudolph C. Flotow produced it, and Eugene J. Forde directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

realize that advanced admission treatments must be reserved for the truly great pictures—those that come along at rare intervals. "Since You Went Away" certainly does not fit this category.

* * *

In addition to demanding a 50% increase in admission prices for the exhibition of "Since You Went Away," United Artists has stipulated that the picture must be played single feature in all situations. While these terms are still ringing in the ears of the exhibitors, and burning the ears of those with subsequent run houses, the picture is playing at the Capitol Theatre in New York, where it is in its third week of an intended twelve weeks' run. The picture, augmented by a stage attraction featuring Gene Krupa and his Orchestra, is playing at regular admission prices.

A vigorous campaign against this deviation from an announced policy has been carried on by Pete Wood, dynamic secretary of the ITO of Ohio, who, after taking Mr. Selznick to task, draws a comparison between his policy and the policy that has been followed by MGM in regards to furnishing high-grade motion picture entertainment at regular admission prices. Says Pete:

"Fortunately for the industry, this company [MGM] does try to inject decency and ethics into the business with respect to the theatre-going public. And while they drive hard bargains with their theatre customers, they do not force the latter into untenable situations insofar as admission prices are concerned. Certainly Loew's, had it been considering only the dollar-and-cents angle, could have demanded that the exhibitors increase their admission scale when they showed 'Mrs. Miniver,' 'Random Harvest,' and 'White Cliffs of Dover.' And while we have no positive assurance of the fact, we understand that 'Dragon Seed' and 'An American Romance' . . . will also be released without asking the theatre-going public, who support this industry, to pay a premium." (ED. NOTE: "Dragon Seed" is now playing at the Radio City Music Hall, in New York, at regular admission prices.)

According to a report in *Film Daily*, Harry Gold, United Artists Eastern division manager, has replied to Wood's protests by stating that the Capitol Theatre has not raised its admission prices for "Since You Went Away," because the theatre's established prices represent the top scale, while established prices in the field are not commensurate with the box-office value of the picture.

The admission prices at the Capitol are as follows:

From opening to 12 noon, 60c; from 12 noon to 5 p.m., 80c; from 5 p.m. to closing, \$1.10.

Consider then the case of the subsequent-run exhibitor in New York City who charges, let us say, a regular admission price of 60c in the evening. Under the terms stipulated by United Artists, he will have to raise his admission price to 90c, a mere 20c cheaper than the price charged by the Capitol, and he offers less entertainment in proportion to the price than does the Capitol, for the Capitol features also a stage show, while he is forbidden to show a second feature. Moreover, he cannot exhibit the picture until many months after it has played the Capitol and other prior runs, with the result that, before the picture becomes available to him, the prior runs will have "milked" a considerable part of his potential gross.

This condition holds true, not only for the New York City area, but also for every key center in the country.

If United Artists has willingly deviated from an announced sales policy in the case of the Capitol Theatre, what guarantee does the exhibitor have that it will not do the same in another highly competitive area?

No faith can be placed in a policy that lends itself to "juggling."

If Selznick and United Artists honestly believe in the greatness of "Since You Went Away," and if they honestly want the picture seen by the "greatest number of people in the shortest possible time," then this paper suggests to them that they stop "juggling" and stop trying to establish precedents. All they need to do is to release the picture in its normal course, at regular admission prices and at fair rental terms, and the public will do the rest.

"Wilson" with Alexander Knox, Charles Coburn and Geraldine Fitzgerald (20th Century-Fox, no release date set; time, 155 min.)

A magnificent production. Under the very capable handling of Darryl F. Zanuck, the producer, and Henry King, the director, "Wilson" emerges as a truly distinguished historical document, one that should be seen by every American, for it depicts with honesty and dignity the highlights in the political and personal life of one of our greatest Presidents, Woodrow Wilson, who literally gave his life to the cause of world peace.

So many multi-million dollar pictures have failed to live up to the claims made for them that it is gratifying to find one that possesses all that has been said for it. The superb production values, enhanced by excellent Technicolor photography, is in itself worth the price of admission. Some of the scenes are breath-taking. But what is even more important is the fact that, unlike most biographical dramas, this one is consistently entertaining throughout; one does not mind in the least its running time of more than two and one-half hours.

The political era depicted begins in 1909, when Wilson, then President of Princeton University, agreed to run on the Democratic ticket for the Governorship of New Jersey, and ends in 1920, when he left the White House, ill in health, his plan for world peace through a League of Nations defeated by a hostile Senate and by the popular vote of the American people, who elected Harding to the Presidency on a platform that opposed Wilson's ideals. A factual presentation of Wilson's valiant but unsuccessful efforts to put over the League presented a problem for the producer in that the subject is filled with controversial political matter, but it must be said to the credit of Mr. Zanuck that he painstakingly and judiciously presented the arguments of both sides, without favoring either, in an honest attempt to keep the picture free from charges of propaganda. As a matter of fact, there is nothing about the picture that can be considered controversial.

The story is interesting, not only because of its historical value, but also because of its deep human interest and rich humor. The highlights in the kaleidoscope of events are many. Some of the outstanding scenes include Wilson's repudiation of machine politics during his campaign for the Governorship; the tumultuous Democratic National Conventions of 1912 and 1916 in which Wilson was twice nominated for the Presidency; the death of his first wife, whose judgment and moral support he was dependent on; his subsequent marriage to Edith Bolling Galt, the second Mrs. Wilson; his acceptance of much political abuse in an effort to keep his country out of war; his war message to Congress after his patience became exhausted with Germany's unrelenting submarine warfare, which threatened the security of the nation; Germany's acceptance of his peace plan and the subsequent conference at Versailles, where his stormy encounters with Clemenceau took place; his political fight with Senator Lodge, who led a Senate bloc in opposition to the League—all these and many other important events are impressively depicted.

The performances of the cast are uniformly excellent. Alexander Knox, as Wilson, gives a skillful and distinguished performance, portraying the President as a stubborn idealist, but one whose strength of character and love of mankind won him the admiration of friend and foe. His love for his family, and his gentle feelings for the two women he married, give the story some very tender moments. Charles Coburn, as Professor Henry Holmes, Wilson's trusted friend; Geraldine Fitzgerald, as the second Mrs. Wilson; Thomas Mitchell, as Joseph Tumulty, Wilson's secretary; Sir Cedric Hardwicke, as Senator Henry Cabot Lodge; Vincent Price, as William G. McAdoo; Ruth Nelson, as the first Mrs. Wilson; and many others in the large cast, which includes thousands of extras, do exceptionally well in supporting roles.

The screen play, written by Lamarr Trotti, is superior.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 1944

No. 33

ACTION AT LAST

After dragging out negotiations for more than a year, the Department of Justice, as most of you no doubt know by this time, has rejected the latest proposals of the consenting distributors, and has filed a petition with the U. S. District Court in New York for a modification of the Consent Decree, which expired on November 20, 1943.

An indication of the Government's attitude is contained in the following statement issued by Attorney General Francis Biddle in connection with the filing of the petition:

"The Department believes that in order to bring the operations of the defendants into conformity with the requirements of the Sherman law, a complete separation of their theatre operating business from their producing and distributing activities, and the divestiture of a substantial number of theatres from the theatre operating companies owned by them, is essential.

"In view of the practical difficulties involved in bringing about such a drastic change in the structure of the industry by judicial means, the Department, in 1940, was willing to postpone its efforts to secure such relief for a three-year period while the consent decree was given a trial and other motion picture cases were litigated. The results today of that litigation and the decisions of the Supreme Court in other Sherman law cases since 1940 have reinforced the Department's original conclusion, first expressed in its complaint filed in 1938, that conformity with the law requires such a modification in the industry's structure."

A summary of the important modifications sought by the Government are, briefly, as follows:

(1) The tradeshowing section, which expired on September 1, 1942, should again be made effective.

(2) The licensing of one feature or group of features shall not be conditioned upon the licensing of another feature or group of features.

(3) An exhibitor shall not be required to license short subjects, newsreels, trailers, serials, westerns, foreigners, or reissues, as a condition of licensing features.

(4) The licensing of pictures in one theatre or group of theatres shall not be conditioned upon the licensing of features in another theatre or group of theatres.

(5) Clearance, even though reasonable as to time and area, shall no longer be considered as essential in the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures. Moreover, clearance shall be deemed to be unreason-

able whenever its effect is to restrain competition between two or more theatres unreasonably. An arbitrator would be empowered to eliminate unreasonable clearances even where the theatres involved are highly competitive. Unreasonable clearances enjoyed by affiliated theatres on the product of the company with which it is affiliated will be subject to arbitration.

(6) The elimination of the maze of restrictions on the right to arbitrate specific runs, and the extension of power to the arbitrator to grant money damages to the complainant for any discrimination that is in violation of the Sherman Act.

(7) Prohibit the acquisition of theatres.

(8) The complete separation of exhibition from production-distribution within a three-year period.

(9) The voiding of theatre pooling agreements and of existing franchises, and the prohibition against similar agreements in the future.

(10) The prohibition against licensing of pictures to an affiliated theatre upon terms that unreasonably restrain the ability of an unaffiliated theatre to compete with it.

Though all the aforementioned modifications are vastly important to the well being of the independent exhibitor, those calling for the divorcement of theatres from production-distribution, the elimination of unreasonable clearances, and the selling of pictures singly, are the ones that are the primary correctives for the evils that beset the industry. They are correctives that HARRISON'S REPORTS has advocated for years as the only means by which the independent exhibitor can hope to free himself from under the monopolistic heel of the producer-distributor.

Many exhibitors blame the small-block selling system for the enormous increase in film rentals, and they have expressed a preference to buy pictures in larger blocks, anywhere from 25% to 50% of the distributor's full season's product, with, of course, a 20% cancellation privilege.

The Department of Justice, however, is apparently set against block booking, either in small blocks or large blocks, for the system conditions the licensing of one feature upon the licensing of other pictures in the block. In the opinion of the Department, recent Supreme Court decisions have made it clear that the tying of one copyright to another is unlawful.

HARRISON'S REPORTS feels that the selling of features singly, after trade-showing, would cause no
(Continued on last page)

**"Greenwich Village" with Carmen Miranda,
Don Ameche and William Bendix**
(20th Century-Fox, September; time, 83 min.)

Lavishly produced, photographed in Technicolor, and combining comedy, romance and music, this is a fairly good mass entertainment, in spite of the fact that the story is of the familiar backstage variety and somewhat trite. The popularity of the leading players should, of course, mean much at the box-office. The most pleasing part of the picture is the tuneful music, most of which is comprised of songs that were popular during the prohibition era, the period in which the story is set. A number of these songs are still popular today. Of the production numbers, one in particular, a Bohemian costume ball, is outstanding; it is a scene of beauty, gayety, and laughter. Carmen Miranda is as amusing as ever with her fiery brand of Latin humor, and her inimitable style of singing is one of the picture's highlights. Don Ameche, as a naive, small-town music composer, and William Bendix, as a tough but kindly nightclub owner, turn in capable performances. Vivian Blaine, a newcomer, makes a favorable impression, but her acting is in need of improvement:—

Ameche comes to New York from Kansas, hoping to gain recognition as a serious composer. He visits Bendix's "speakeasy" in Greenwich Village, where he meets Carmen Miranda, a fortune teller, and Vivian Blaine, a singer, to whom he becomes attracted. Bendix, whose secret ambition was to produce a musical show, offers to use Ameche's music. Ameche, piqued because of his inability to obtain an interview with Emil Rameau, a noted conductor, gives Bendix permission to use portions of his concerto. Meanwhile Felix Bressart, a penniless concert violinist, recognizes the value of Ameche's concerto and manages to induce Rameau to listen to it. After the audition, Bressart falsely informs Ameche that Rameau planned to conduct the concerto at Carnegie Hall. He induces Ameche to give him \$3500 as a payment bond for the musicians. Ameche goes to Carnegie Hall to listen to the first rehearsal, and is appalled to learn that he had been hoaxed. Vivian, learning of the swindle, appeals to Bendix to help her find Bressart. The circumstances under which Bendix and Vivian recover the money lead Ameche to believe that they were part of the conspiracy to bilk him. Disheartened, he prepares to leave New York. But Carmen, understanding the situation, tricks him into rushing to the premiere of Bendix's show to stop the use of his music. Ameche arrives in time to hear and see Rameau conduct the playing of his concerto. Realizing that he had misjudged his friends, Ameche begs their forgiveness.

Earl Baldwin and Walter Bullock wrote the screen play, William LeBaron produced it, and Walter Lang directed it. The cast includes Tony and Sally DeMarco, B. S. Pully, the Four Step Brothers, Tom Dugan and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Gypsy Wildcat" with Maria Montez
and Jon Hall**

(Universal, September 1; time, 75 min.)

If the previous pictures in Universal's series of Technicolor adventure melodramas have proved acceptable to your patrons, there is no reason why this one should not be accorded a similar reception. It is the sort of picture that harks back to the old-fashioned type of melodrama, and, as such, should appeal mostly to the rabid action fans who are not too exacting in their demands. Others, however, may find the proceedings boring, for the story lacks dramatic depth. Set against a medieval background, the action includes such melodramatic incidents as the abduction of the heroine by a villainous nobleman; her rescue by a gallant young soldier of fortune; armored knights in battle; and numerous hair-raising escapes. Jon Hall is properly dashing as the hero, while Maria Montez is her usual seductive self as the heroine. Nigel Bruce and Leo Carrillo lend able support. As in the other pictures, the production, enhanced by Technicolor, is lavish:—

A band of gypsies, including Maria Montez, a dancer, and Leo Carrillo, their chieftain, are imprisoned by Baron Douglas Dumbrille, charged with the murder of a Count, whose heart had been pierced with an arrow. Jon Hall, a soldier of fortune, was aware of the gypsies' innocence, for he had removed the arrow, marked with the Baron's coat of arms, from the Count's body. Noticing that a pendant worn by Maria was inscribed with crest of the dead Count's family, Dumbrille realizes that she was the Count's long lost daughter and, by virtue thereof, heiress to his lands and fortune. Hall steals into the castle and accuses the Baron of the murder. The Baron's soldiers capture and imprison him in the dungeon with the gypsies. Hall valiantly overpowers his guards and helps the gypsies to escape. Meanwhile Maria had consented to marry the Baron on his promise to free her people. Warned that the gypsies had escaped from the dungeon, the Baron abducts Maria and flees with her in a carriage. Hall and the gypsies pursue him, and in turn are pursued by the Baron's soldiers, who overtake them just as they halt the carriage. A battle ensues in which the soldiers are routed and the Baron killed by one of his own arrows. Maria learns of her noble status, but does not let it interfere with her love for Hall.

James Hogan, Gene Lewis, and James M. Cain wrote the screen play, George Wagner produced it, and Roy William Neill directed it. The cast includes Peter Coe, Gale Sondergaard, Curt Bois, Harry Cording and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"In Society" with Abbott and Costello

(Universal, August 18; time, 73 min.)

An hilarious slapstick comedy, if one is to judge the picture by the audience reaction it received at a New York sneak preview. It is the first of the Abbott and Costello pictures to be made in more than a year, owing to the illness of Lou Costello. This time the boys, as plumbers, get themselves into numerous mixups when the butler of a wealthy society matron mistakes them for guests at a charity affair. As in the preceding pictures made by this comedy pair, the story is featherweight, serving merely as a framework for their familiar slapstick routines, made up of both old and new gags, most of which provoke hearty laughter despite their utter ridiculousness. A few pleasing musical interludes are worked into the story, with Will Osborne's orchestra furnishing the music, and Marion Hutton the singing. Miss Hutton and Kirby Grant provide some romantic interest. Arthur Treacher helps considerably with his brand of English humor:—

Abbott and Costello, partners in a plumbing business, go to the home of wealthy Thurston Hall to repair a leaky bathroom. Their inefficient work results in a flood that almost ruins the house. Thurston writes an indignant letter to the boys, threatening to sue them, but by mistake sends them an invitation to spend a week-end at the swank estate of Margaret Irving, a wealthy society matron. Thomas Gomez, who had loaned the boys money to start their business, threatens to close their shop unless they help him to steal a priceless painting from Miss Irving's home. The boys refuse. At the estate, the boys make themselves conspicuous by their ignorance of formal etiquette. Costello is almost killed when he rides a nasty-tempered horse during a fox hunt. Meanwhile Gomez arrives at the estate and manages to steal the painting. Anne Gillis, Miss Irving's daughter, jealous because Kirby Grant, her boy-friend, was being attentive to Marion Hutton, a friend of the boys, accuses all three of stealing the painting. To vindicate themselves, the boys commandeer a fire truck and pursue Gomez. After a hectic chase full of hair-raising events, the boys capture Gomez and recover the painting.

John Grant, Edmund L. Hartmann, and Hal Fimberg wrote the screen play. Mr. Hartmann produced it, and Jean Yarbrough directed it. The cast includes Steve Geray, George Dolenz, the Three Sisters and others.

Suitable for all.

"Sing Neighbor Sing" with Brad Taylor and Ruth Terry

(Republic, August 2; time, 70 min.)

This is another one of Republic's diverting program comedies, featuring popular radio entertainers who specialize in music of the hillbilly variety. The story, which is based on the deception theme, is nothing to cheer about, but it is not objectionable, for the actions of the characters are treated in a comedy vein. It should go over fairly well with undiscriminating audiences, for the music is plentiful and pleasant, and the story has a good number of amusing incidents. The spirited performances help the proceedings immeasurably:—

Brad Taylor, who impersonated a bearded psychologist on a radio program, and Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys, who furnished the music, lose their jobs. They head for California in a broken-down limousine, hoping to find work there. En route, they stop at a small college, where Taylor dons his professorial disguise to promote a meal for himself and his pals. He is mistaken for a distinguished psychology professor, and Harry "Pappy" Cheshire, the Dean, offers him \$100 to give a lecture. Virginia Brissac, the school's irascible founder, rejects payment of a fee, but Taylor, attracted to Ruth Terry, her niece, agrees to lecture without payment. Taylor's lectures and Acuff's music win over the students, who plead with them to stay on indefinitely. At one of the lectures, Taylor hypnotizes Miss Brissac and reveals that her mean disposition was caused by her frustrated love for the Dean. At every opportunity, Taylor doffs his disguise to romance with Ruth, eventually winning her love. Meanwhile the real professor, learning that Taylor was impersonating him, travels to the school and arrives in the midst of a party tendered to Taylor by the students in appreciation of his good work. Exposed, Taylor confesses the ruse. His explanation is accepted, and it all ends happily with Miss Brissac and the Dean resuming their romance; Taylor resuming his normal self and turning his full attentions to Ruth; and the real professor agreeing to take over the lecture series, so as to continue Taylor's good work.

Dorrell and Stuart McGowan wrote the screen play, Donald H. Brown produced it, and Frank McDonald directed it. The cast includes Lulubelle and Scotty, the Milo Twins, Carolina Cotton, Beverly Loyd, Olin Howlin and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Seven Doors to Death" with Chick Chandler and June Clyde

(PRC, July 25; time, 61 min.)

In spite of the fact that the story is illogical and muddled, this murder-mystery melodrama should get by as a second feature in theatres that cater to undiscriminating audiences. The over-abundance of dialogue tends to slow up the action, but this is offset by some comedy and a fair share of suspense. Most all the action takes place in a community shopping center, made up of seven shops, with each of the proprietors suspected of the crime. The fact that the murderer's identity is not revealed until the finish helps to maintain one's interest. Though there are a minimum of sets, the production values are good:—

Surprised when June Clyde rushes out of a shopping center, jumps on the running board of his car, and orders him to speed away, Chick Chandler, a young architect, crashes the car into a dead-end wall. June disappears, and Chandler returns to the shopping center in search of her. There he finds a murdered man. He hastens to the police station, where he is detained all night. In the morning, the police inform Chandler that a dead man had been found, but not the one described by him. The police find June and learn from her that she was the niece and logical heir of the shopping center's owner, her aunt. June admits that

she had quarreled often with the dead man, her aunt's attorney. Learning that June was suspected of the murder, and curious to find out what happened to the body of the dead man he had discovered, Chandler questions June and learns that she had gone to her aunt's home in the shopping center to leave some valuable jewels in the safe. As she closed the safe door, she heard some shots and had fled from the house. Chandler deduces that one of the owners of the seven shops in the center was responsible for the crimes. Aided by June, he carries on an investigation of his own and finds the missing body in the basement of one of the shops. The police identify the body as that of a master thief, whose fingerprints had been found on the safe. Additional clues and a series of events lead Chandler to George Meeker, one of the shop owners, whom he unmasks as the killer. Meeker, a taxidermist, had stolen the jewels, killing both the attorney and the master thief, who, too, were after the gems. He had grafted the skin from the master thief's fingers and had made molds, enabling him to leave false fingerprints on the safe.

Elmer Clifton wrote the screen play, and Alfred Stern produced it. Mr. Clifton directed it. The cast includes Michael Raffeto, Rebel Randall and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Maisie Goes to Reno" with Ann Sothern and John Hodiak

(MGM, September; time, 90 min.)

Followers of the "Maisie" pictures should find this newest of the series to their liking, for it is quite amusing. This time "Maisie" becomes entangled in the marital affairs of a young soldier and his wealthy bride, putting a stop to their pending divorce, which had been engineered by the bride's attorney and her secretary-companion. The story itself is far-fetched and even slightly silly in spots, but the pace is fast, it has some excitement, and the comedy situations are plentiful. As "Maisie," the likeable working girl with a heart of gold, Ann Sothern gives her usual good performance. Her actions are the cause for considerable laughter, because of the aggressive way in which she goes about trying to expose the plot against the young couple:—

Victim of a nervous disorder that caused her to wink, Ann Sothern, welder in an aircraft plant, is given a two weeks vacation. Chick Chandler, band leader and her former employer, persuades Ann to come to Reno and work for him during her vacation. At the bus station, Ann meets Tom Drake, a young soldier, who tells her of his marriage to Ava Gardner, a wealthy girl. Ava, for reasons unknown to Drake, had gone to Reno for a divorce. Drake, desperately seeking to halt the divorce, begs Ann to deliver a letter to his wife. Arriving in Reno, Ann goes to the ranch where Ava was staying. There she meets Marta Linden, Ava's secretary-companion, whom Paul Cavanagh, Ava's attorney, introduces to her as Drake's wife. Ann gives her the letter. Later, Ann discovers the real Ava when she attempts to return a match box she had unwittingly taken from the ranch. Realizing that Marta and Cavanagh were practicing a fraud on Ava, Ann determines to get to the bottom of the plot. She learns that the pair were in league with Bernard Nedell, a forger, who was signing Drake's name to letters demanding money from Ava. The trio, by persuading Ava to secure a divorce, hoped to be rid of Drake so that they could mulct her of her fortune. On the day of the divorce hearing, Ann, aided by Roland Dupree, a bellhop, and by John Hodiak, a blackjack dealer, with whom she had fallen in love, attempts to kidnap Ava only to discover that she had kidnapped the disguised Marta. This leads to a series of complications that end with Ann convincing Ava of the plot against her; the arrest of the crooked trio; and a reunion between Ava and Drake.

Mary C. McCall, Jr. wrote the screen play, George Haight produced it, and Harry Beaumont directed it. The cast includes Bunny Waters, Donald Meek, Byron Foulger and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

hardship to the exhibitors. As a matter of fact, such a system is sound, for it requires that pictures be sold on merit, allowing the exhibitor to pay the distributor a film rental commensurate with the pictures' box-office value; it does away with the wrangling over cancellation privileges; and it permits the buying of as many pictures as the exhibitor desires from one distributor, all of which could be bought under one contract without compelling him to accept an undesirable picture as a condition of obtaining the pictures he wants.

There is no doubt in the mind of this writer that the recommendations of the National Council of Unaffiliated Exhibitors were, in a large measure, instrumental in influencing the Department of Justice to reject the distributors' unsatisfactory proposals, and to seek relief through the courts. This Council, as most of you probably remember, was composed of authorized representatives of 22 national and regional independent exhibitor organizations, which, under the auspices of National Allied, met in Chicago on January 31 and February 1 of this year for the specific purpose of analyzing the distributors' proposals for changes in the Decree, and of submitting to the Department a comprehensive report of their findings, outlining their objections, counter-proposals, and recommendations. A complete review of this report was printed in this paper's issues of February 19 and 26.

According to the trade papers, the suddenness of the Government's move caught the consenting companies by surprise. It is to be expected, however, that they will vehemently oppose the petition. The defendants have fifteen days in which to file their objections with the Court, but there is a possibility that extensions will be granted to them.

Meanwhile the Government's decision to proceed through the Courts clears the atmosphere and removes the uncertainty that has prevailed during the long drawn-out negotiations. The distributors were given an opportunity to curb their predatory practices, but they failed utterly to do so. Now the Government is determined to accomplish the primary objective of its original proceeding—the restoration of free enterprise and open competition amongst all branches of the motion picture industry.

"Oh, What a Night!" with Edmund Lowe, Jean Parker and Marjorie Rambeau

(Monogram, Sept. 2; time, 71 min.)

A fairly entertaining melodrama, with comedy, centering around jewel thieves. Although the story is familiar in theme and in treatment, it should fit nicely on the lower half of a double bill, for the comedy situations are amusing. And, since the action is kept moving at a pretty fast pace, one's interest does not lag. As in most comedy-melodramas of this type, the story hasn't much human appeal; nor are the actions of the characters such as to awaken the spectator's sympathy. The performances are, however, engaging:—

Edmund Lowe, Pierre Watkin, Ivan Lebedeff, and George Lewis, all international jewel thieves, working independently of each other, arrive at a fashionable California resort to await the arrival of Marjorie Rambeau, ex-burlesque queen and owner of a fabulous diamond. Jean Parker, Watkin's niece, was unaware

of her uncle's "business" affairs. She assumed that he and Lowe, whom she had met earlier in the day, were vacationing. Unknown to the other thieves, Lowe, because of a past favor, had promised Detective Alan Dinehart that he would not only refrain from stealing the diamond himself, but would also see to it that the jewel remained in Marjorie's possession. Lowe counters the efforts of the other crooks to steal the gem, but, at a dinner party, Watkin steals it while dancing with Marjorie. Lowe, by this time very fond of Jean, determines to retrieve the jewel without letting her know that her uncle was a thief. He surprises Watkin in the act of packing for his getaway and, at gun point, compels him to hand over the diamond, but he does it in a way that leads Jean to believe that he (Lowe) is the thief. Returning the diamond to Dinehart, Lowe leaves the country, convinced that, because of his questionable character, he had done the noble thing in shunning Jean's love.

Paul Gerard Smith and Ben Cohen wrote the screen play, Scott R. Dunlap produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. The cast includes Olaf Hytten, Karin Lang, Claire DuBrey and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Dangerous Journey"

(20th Century-Fox, September; time, 73 min.)

An interesting and, at times, highly informative travelogue. Photographed by the Armand Denis-Leila Roosevelt Expedition, the picture is a colorful recording of the expedition's travels through Africa, India, Ceylon, and Burma.

Although much of the footage is given over to jungle scenes that are only mildly interesting because they present nothing novel to picture-goers, there are a number of outstanding sequences showing tribal customs and ceremonies that hold one fascinated. For instance, one sees how certain savage African tribes permanently mutilate their bodies and facial features in the belief that it enhances their beauty. The remarkable thing about it is that those undergoing the torturous mutilation go through it without whimpering or complaining.

The most exciting scenes are those that show the methods used to capture and train a wild elephant; one is astounded by the fearlessness of the natives as they methodically subdue the enraged elephant without harming it.

Other unusual scenes, some of which will sicken sensitive people, show religious fanatics in India going through all sorts of torture to "cleanse" themselves of sin. They put spikes through their tongues, nails into their bodies, and hooks through their flesh, permitting people to pull on them. Shown also is the custom of burning dead bodies, after which the ashes are swept into the River Ganges. The religious fanatics are shown bathing in the so-called sacred waters of the Ganges, and then drinking the same dirty water.

A most gripping sequence is the one that shows a Burma Priestess going through a snake ritual in which she wards off the thrusts of a deadly Cobra, kissing it on the head three times.

It is not a pleasant picture. The scenes of torture may sicken children and many adolescents.

There is a running commentary contributed by Conrad Nagel.

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A COMMENDABLE REVERSAL OF POLICY

According to a joint statement issued this week by Neil F. Agnew, vice-president of Vanguard Films, and Carl Leserman, General Sales Manager of United Artists, David O. Selznick's "Since You Went Away" will be released at regular admission prices.

In deciding upon this new policy, Mr. Selznick does away with his original plan to release the picture under terms that required the exhibitor to increase his existing admission prices by 50%—a policy that was opposed bitterly by many exhibitors, for it would have placed them in an untenable position with their patrons, whose indignation is mounting steadily because of the practice that requires them to pay a premium every time a better-than-average picture comes along.

The pitfalls of Mr. Selznick's original policy were discussed editorially in the August 5 issue of this paper.

Mr. Selznick is to be congratulated for having had the courage and good sense to reverse himself on an important issue of sales policy. HARRISON'S REPORTS feels confident that his decision to release "Since You Went Away" at regular admission prices will result in more people seeing the picture than would have seen it at advanced prices. Consequently, his action should assure him a very fair return on his investment, and at the same time should serve to prevent the widening of a breach between the exhibitors and their patrons.

For his recognition of an objectionable practice—advanced admissions—and for his willingness to do something about it, Mr. Selznick is entitled to the full cooperation of every exhibitor.

HERBERT J. YATES' VIEWS ON TELEVISION

Complying with my request for a statement from him in regard to Television, Herbert J. Yates, Sr., of Consolidated Film Industries, owners of Republic Pictures Corporation, has sent me the following letter:

"Television, in my opinion, is perhaps the most potential major competitor that the motion picture has had to encounter. In its present stage of development, I do not think it offers any immediate threat to theatre attendance. However, in this age of scientific miracles, who is to say that in the not too distant future, the majority of all technical details of television transmission will not be solved? If and when this happens, the televised program of entertainment will most certainly vie with the motion picture for audience and public appeal.

"There is a possibility that television can be adapted by the theatre to augment motion picture entertainment, such as the presentation of current events, and, in production, it can be helpful in the discovery of new talent. However, every help that it can render the industry as a whole is offset by the possibilities of having the living room of every home become competition to the established theatre.

Every showman should study this situation diligently and I figure it is fair to assume that television and televised programs will go all out to win the favor of the theatre-going public.

"Television has demonstrated that it can use sight, sound, color and flesh, as well as the motion picture. While it is not as refined as yet, there is no reason to say that it will not be brought up to perfection.

"I think we of the motion picture industry should organize and perfect plans to meet this new competition. Unquestionably we can hold our own against television or any other competition to our audiences, provided we get together on a platform which will promote unity, perpetuate showmanship, and inspire new ideas and quality of production. We certainly have the intelligence and brains in the motion picture industry, if we organize and properly direct them in the channels that will meet any challenge that television will have to offer. If we will do this, we can still be the public's Number One choice of entertainment.

"However, we must remind ourselves at all times to be on the alert and keep up with all new developments of television, and never forget what happened to the great vaudeville world, when it ignored the motion picture as a competitor, and ridiculed it as a passing fancy with the public. For this lack of foresight, vaudeville as a national institution went out of business. I am confident that we, forewarned, will not make this mistake."

BOX-OFFICE PERFORMANCES

(The previous box-office performances were printed in the February 5, 1944 issue:

Columbia

"The Racket Man": Poor
"Swing Out the Blues": Fair-Poor
"Beautiful But Broke": Fair-Poor
"None Shall Escape": Fair
"The Ghost That Walks Alone": Poor
"Nine Girls": Fair
"Sailor's Holiday": Poor
"Hey, Rookie": Fair
"Two Men Submarine": Fair-Poor
"The Whistler": Fair
"Cover Girl": Excellent-Very Good
"Jam Session": Fair
"Girl in the Case": Fair
"The Black Parachute": Fair-Poor
"Once Upon a Time": Good-Fair
"Underground Guerillas": Poor
"Stars on Parade": Fair-Poor
"Address Unknown": Fair

Eighteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Excellent-Very Good, 1; Good-Fair, 1; Fair, 7; Fair-Poor, 5; Poor, 4.

(Continued on last page)

"The Merry Monahans"
with Donald O'Connor, Peggy Ryan
and Jack Oakie

(Universal, Sept. 15; time, 91 min.)

Good mass entertainment. Although not a big picture, it has been given a pretty lavish production, and it offers comedy, music, romance, and dancing of the type to appeal to most picture-goers. The story is familiar; one overlooks this, however, for it has considerable human interest, the plot developments are amusing, and the performances are engaging. The action takes place during the period from 1900 to 1918, and it revolves around the ups-and-downs of a family vaudeville troupe—father, daughter, and son. Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan are their usual exuberant selves, thoroughly entertaining one with their comedy antics, singing, and dancing. Jack Oakie, as their father, brightens things up considerably. The music is very pleasant, especially when sung by Ann Blyth. The tunes include favorite songs of the era depicted, and a few new songs, one of which, "Lovely," is destined to become a popular hit:—

At the turn of the century, Oakie, a comedian, proposes to Rosemary De Camp, his vaudeville partner. Rosemary accepts Oakie, but Isabel Jewell, an unscrupulous chorus girl, tricks him into marrying her. A number of years later, Isabel deserts Oakie, leaving him with their two small children (Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan). The youngsters join Oakie's act and, by 1917, become headliners on the Keith Circuit. During one of their tours, they meet Rosemary, now a widow, and Ann Blyth, her daughter, with whom Donald falls in love. Ann sang in an act, teamed with John Miljan, a former matinee idol, whom she disliked. Miljan made it appear as if he were doing Rosemary a favor to keep Ann in the act; actually, she was the mainstay of his routine, a fact he fully realized. Oakie begins to court Rosemary again, but she turns him down in favor of Miljan. Heartbroken, Oakie takes to drink and is given a thirty-days jail sentence for disturbing the peace. Donald and Peggy continue with the act and become overnight sensations in a Broadway show. Meanwhile Ann had been instrumental in breaking up the pending marriage of Miljan and her mother. Released from jail, Oakie determines to become a teetotaler, and decides not to impede his children's progress. He disappears. Peggy and Donald trace him to New York. There, together with Rosemary and Ann, the youngsters and Oakie participate in a Liberty Loan rally. A Broadway producer catches their performance and offers them a contract.

Michael Fessier and Ernest Pagano wrote the screen play and produced it. Charles Lamont directed it.

"Marriage Is a Private Affair"
with Lana Turner, John Hodiak
and James Craig

(MGM, October; time, 116 min.)

A tedious, overlong martial drama; its fate at the box-office will depend largely on the strength of Lana Turner's popularity. The story is a weak affair that "wanders all over the lot," gets no place in particular, and lacks dramatic power. For example, Miss Turner is shown as a selfish young wife, who finds herself in a constant state of confusion while endeavoring to make a go of her marriage. Yet there is no apparent reason for her being confused, for John

Hodiak, her husband, a sincere, kindly fellow, had done nothing to cause her to worry. One feels no sympathy for Miss Turner, for the character she portrays is shallow and unbelievable. As a matter of fact, most of the main characters behave in an unbelievable manner. In addition to the main plot, there are several by-plots, equally as weak, which serve only to add to the tediousness. As it stands, the picture's appeal will be directed mainly to women, for there are shown displays of beautiful clothes, worn by Miss Turner:—

Lana Turner, gay, irresponsible daughter of a three-times married woman (Natalie Schafer) weds Lieutenant John Hodiak after a whirlwind courtship. They settle down in Boston, where Hodiak, against his will, is relieved of active duty so that he could supervise vital war work at his factory. Within a year, Lana has a baby. Determined not to follow in the footsteps of her mother, Lana tries to be a model wife, patterning her married life after that of Hodiak's closest friends, Frances Gifford and Herbert Rudley. Meanwhile Hodiak seeks to rehabilitate Hugh Marlowe, another close friend, who had taken to drink, so that he could take over management of the factory, thus freeing him for active duty. Lana finds her faith in marriage crumbling when she inadvertently learns that Frances and Marlowe were carrying on a clandestine romance. A chance meeting with Captain James Craig, one of her old suitors, awakens something within her, and she begins to wonder whether or not she was really in love with her husband. To make certain, she secretly visits Craig's apartment. Hodiak learns of the visit. They quarrel and separate. While waiting for her divorce, Lana meets Craig once again. When he takes her into his arms, she suddenly realizes that it is Hodiak whom she loves. Craig, understanding her feelings, uses his influence to put through a long distance call to a South Pacific base, where Hodiak had returned to active service. Lana informs her husband of her intention to wait for him.

David Hertz and Lenore Coffee wrote the screen play based on the novel by Judith Kelly. Pandro S. Berman produced it, and Robert Z. Leonard directed it. The cast includes Keenan Wynn, Paul Cavanagh, Morris Ankrum and others.

There are no objectionable situations.

"Strangers in the Night"
with William Terry, Virginia Grey
and Helene Thimig

(Republic, September 12; time, 56 min.)

A slow-moving but extremely suspenseful program mystery drama; audiences that enjoy this type of entertainment should find it to their liking. The story is more or less a character study of a crippled, demented woman, whose frustrated desire to have a child leads her to create an imaginary daughter. Because of the fact that it is not revealed until the closing scenes that the daughter was a figment of her imagination, one's interest is held throughout by the woman's mysterious movements and her murderous efforts to prevent others from learning of her secret. It is not a pleasant entertainment, because of its funereal atmosphere, and its display of cruelty; there is no comedy relief:—

William Terry, a Marine in the South Pacific, corresponds and falls in love with "Rosemary Blake," whose name and address he had found on the fly leaf of a book. Wounded in action, Terry returns to the

United States and heads for "Rosemary's" home town. He strikes up an acquaintance on the train with Virginia Grey, a woman doctor, who had her office in the same town for which he was heading. Arriving at his destination, Terry goes to "Rosemary's" home, where he is greeted warmly by Helene Thimig, her mother. She invites him to stay for a few days until "Rosemary" returns from a short trip, and she shows him a huge portrait of her daughter. Terry is struck with the girl's beauty. When Terry's old wounds suddenly require attention, Miss Thimig sends for Virginia. The old woman shows obvious displeasure upon learning that the two had met previously. After a few days, Terry begins to feel uneasy in the house, and suspects something to be wrong because of "Rosemary's" failure to return. He recognizes the brush technique of "Rosemary's" portrait as the work of an old college friend, and leaves for San Francisco to visit him. During his absence, Edith Barrett, Miss Thimig's timid companion, tries to send a letter to Virginia. Miss Thimig intercepts the letter and poisons her companion. The following day, Terry returns and, in the presence of Virginia, reveals that "Rosemary" was a figment of Miss Thimig's imagination, and that she herself had been corresponding with him. To prevent the young couple from disclosing her secret, and to still their suspicions about Miss Barrett's death, Miss Thimig makes an unsuccessful attempt on their lives. Appealing to her imaginary daughter for help, the huge portrait falls from the wall and crushes the demented woman to death.

Bryant Ford and Paul Gangelin wrote the screen play, Rudolph E. Abel produced it, and Anthony Mann directed it.

**"Kansas City Kitty" with Joan Davis,
Bob Crosby and Jane Frazee**

(Columbia, August 24; time, 72 min.)

A moderately entertaining program comedy, with some music. Some of the situations are funny, but for the greater part the story is so silly and the comedy so forced that it becomes tiresome. Its chief asset is Joan Davis, whose familiar comedy antics provoke considerable laughter in spots, but even her efforts are not enough to overcome the mediocre material. Not even in the musical end does the picture present anything unusual:—

Robert Emmett Keane and Tim Ryan, owners of a nearly-bankrupt music publishing house, persuade Joan Davis, a piano teacher, to join their organization as a "song-plugger." Unable to pay her a salary, they make her a member of the firm. When a cowboy visits the office and seeks to have his song, "Kansas City Kitty," published, Joan purchases it for a small sum. Jane Frazee, a night-club singer and Joan's friend, sings the song, and it becomes an immediate hit. Meanwhile Keane and Ryan are confronted with jail because of a bad check they had issued before Joan joined the firm. To save themselves, they offer to sell their interest in the firm. Joan raises the money through Jane, who invests the savings owned jointly by herself and Bob Crosby, her fiancé. Just as business begins to improve, the girls find themselves charged with plagiarism by Matt Willis, who claimed that "Kansas City Kitty" was stolen from "Minnesota Minnie," a song he had published years previously. Joan decides to use her feminine charms in an

effort to persuade Willis to withdraw the suit. She invites him up to her apartment for dinner. Her scheme is spoiled, however, when Erik Rolf, her regular boy-friend, pays her an unexpected visit. Joan is compelled to eat dinner with both men in separate rooms, with each unaware of the other's presence. Eventually, Willis discovers the deception and stomps out of the apartment. He hails Joan to court. There, he proves conclusively that "Kansas City Kitty" was stolen from "Minnesota Minnie." Joan's boy-friend saves the day when he rushes into the court room with proof that "Minnesota Minnie" was stolen from a world-famous rhapsody. Joan wins the suit.

Manny Seff wrote the screen play, Ted Richmond produced it, and Del Lord directed it. The cast includes Charles Williams, Lee Gotch, the Williams Brothers and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Cry of the Werewolf"
with Nina Foch and Stephen Crane**
(Columbia, August 17; time, 64 min.)

Just a routine program horror melodrama, containing little to distinguish it from countless other pictures of its type. It is an implausible tale about supernatural doings, revolving around a beautiful gypsy princess, who turns into a "werewolf" at will, mangle and murdering several persons in an effort to guard the secret of her mother's tomb. The usual eerie effects have been employed to create a tense atmosphere, but the general effect is weak, for the action lacks excitement and there is little suspense. Another thing against it is the fact that the players mean nothing at the box-office. Some romantic interest has been worked into the plot, but it is incidental:—

Nina Foch, princess of a gypsy tribe, learns from one of her subjects (Ivan Triesault), that Fritz Leiber, head of a New Orleans museum, which had once been her mother's home, had discovered conclusive proof that her mother had been a werewolf, and that he intended to publish a book on the subject. Nina slips into the museum and steps quickly through a secret panel leading to her mother's old room. Later, Leiber is found dead, his body mangled. Stephen Crane, Leiber's son, and Osa Massen, his assistant, help the police to investigate the murder. They find a clue in Leiber's manuscript indicating that a werewolf might have committed the crime. The police laugh off their claim of a supernatural element in the murder. Learning that Triesault, who was employed at the museum, was suspected by the police, Nina kills him so that he would not talk, thus implicating her. Lest Crane and Osa find conclusive proof in the manuscript that would lead to her undoing, Nina makes several unsuccessful attempts on their lives. She finally traps Osa in the museum and, through hypnosis, attempts to make her one of the werewolf tribe. Crane arrives in the midst of the ritual. Angered, Nina turns into a wolf and attempts to destroy both Crane and Osa. The police arrive during the desperate struggle and a bullet fells the animal. As it dies, it slowly assumes the dead form of Nina.

Griffin Jay and Charles O'Neal wrote the screen play, Wallace MacDonald produced it, and Henry Levine directed it. The cast includes Barton MacLane, Blanche Yurka and others.

Not for children.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

"Lost Angel": Good-Fair
 "Cry 'Havoc' ": Fair
 "Song of Russia": Good-Fair
 "Madame Curie": Good
 "A Guy Named Joe": Very Good-Good
 "Rationing": Good
 "Broadway Rhythm": Good
 "See Here, Private Hargrove": Very Good
 "The Heavenly Body": Fair-Poor
 "Swing Fever": Poor
 "Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble": Good
 "Gaslight": Very Good-Good
 "Meet the People": Fair-Poor
 "Three Men in White": Fair
 "Two Girls and a Sailor": Very Good
 "Tunisian Victory": Poor

Sixteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Very Good, 2; Very Good-Good, 2; Good, 4; Good-Fair, 2; Fair, 2; Fair-Poor, 2; Poor, 2.

Paramount

"Henry Aldrich, Boy Scout": Fair
 "Miracle of Morgan's Creek": Very Good
 "Timber Queen": Fair-Poor
 "Standing Room Only": Good
 "The Uninvited": Very Good-Good
 "The Navy Way": Fair
 "The Hour Before the Dawn": Fair
 "You Can't Ration Love": Fair
 "Going My Way": Excellent
 "Lady in the Dark": Very Good-Good
 "The Story of Dr. Wassell": Very Good
 "For Whom the Bell Tolls": Very Good
 "And the Angels Sing": Good
 "Henry Aldrich Plays Cupid": Fair
 "The Hitler Gang": Fair-Poor
 "Gambler's Choice": Fair
 "Double Indemnity": Very Good-Good

Seventeen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Excellent, 1; Very Good, 3; Very Good-Good, 3; Good, 2; Fair, 6; Fair-Poor, 2.

RKO

"Around the World": Fair
 "The Ghost Ship": Fair
 "Tarzan's Desert Mystery": Fair
 "Rookies in Burma": Fair-Poor
 "Higher and Higher": Good-Fair
 "Tender Comrade": Good
 "Passport to Destiny": Fair-Poor
 "Curse of the Cat People": Fair
 "Escape to Danger": Poor
 "Action in Arabia": Fair
 "The Falcon Out West": Fair
 "Days of Glory": Fair-Poor
 "Yellow Canary": Fair-Poor
 "Seven Days Ashore": Fair
 "Show Business": Very Good-Good
 "Up in Arms": Very Good

Sixteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 1; Good, 1; Good-Fair, 1; Fair, 7; Fair-Poor, 4; Poor, 1.

20th Century-Fox

"The Lodger": Good
 "Uncensored": Poor
 "Lifeboat": Good-Fair

"Jane Eyre": Very Good-Good
 "The Sullivans": Good
 "The Purple Heart": Good
 "Four Jills in a Jeep": Good-Fair
 "Buffalo Bill": Good
 "Tampico": Fair
 "Pin Up Girl": Very Good-Good
 "Bermuda Mystery": Fair
 "Eve of St. Mark": Good-Fair
 "Ladies of Washington": Fair-Poor

Thirteen pictures have been checked with the following results:

Very Good-Good, 2; Good, 4; Good-Fair, 3; Fair, 2; Fair-Poor, 1; Poor, 1.

United Artists

"Three Russian Girls": Poor
 "Knickerbocker Holiday": Poor
 "Bridge of San Luis Rey": Fair
 "It Happened Tomorrow": Good-Fair
 "Voice in the Wind": Poor
 "Up in Mabel's Room": Good
 "Song of the Open Road": Fair-Poor
 "The Hairy Ape": Good-Fair

Eight pictures have been checked with the following results:

Good, 1; Good-Fair, 2; Fair, 1; Fair-Poor, 1; Poor, 3.

Universal

"Sing a Jingle": Poor
 "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves": Good
 "Spider Woman": Fair
 "Phantom Lady": Good-Fair
 "Swingtime Johnny": Fair-Poor
 "The Impostor": Fair-Poor
 "Weekend Pass": Fair-Poor
 "Chip Off the Old Block": Fair
 "Hat Check Honey": Fair-Poor
 "Ladies Courageous": Fair-Poor
 "Hi! Good Lookin' ": Fair-Poor
 "Weird Woman": Fair-Poor
 "Her Primitive Man": Fair-Poor
 "Moon Over Las Vegas": Fair-Poor
 "Slightly Terrific": Fair-Poor
 "Cobra Woman": Fair
 "Pardon My Rhythm": Fair-Poor
 "The Scarlet Claw": Fair
 "This Is the Life": Good
 "The Invisible Man's Revenge": Fair
 "Ghost Catchers": Fair-Poor

Twenty-one pictures have been checked with the following results:

Good, 2; Good-Fair, 1; Fair, 5; Fair-Poor, 12; Poor, 1.

Warner Brothers

"Crime School" (reissue): Good-Fair
 "Girls on Probation" (reissue): Fair
 "Destination Tokyo": Very Good
 "The Desert Song": Good
 "This Is the Army": Excellent-Very Good
 "In Our Time": Good-Fair
 "Frisco Kid" (reissue): Good-Fair
 "Passage to Marseilles": Good
 "Shine on Harvest Moon": Very Good-Good
 "Uncertain Glory": Good-Fair
 "Between Two Worlds": Fair
 "Make Your Own Bed": Fair

Twelve pictures have been checked with the following results:

Excellent-Very Good, 1; Very Good, 1; Very Good-Good, 1; Good, 2; Good-Fair, 4; Fair, 3.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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Marked Trails—Monogram (59 min.)	not reviewed
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Music in Manhattan—RKO (81 min.)	123
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Once Upon a Time—Columbia (89 min.)	110
Shadows in the Night—Columbia (67 min.)	127
Seven Doors to Death—PRC (61 min.)	131
Seventh Cross, The—MGM (111 min.)	119
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Sonora Stage Coach—Monogram (59 min.)	not reviewed
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Three of a Kind—Monogram (67 min.)	106
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U-Boat Prisoner—Columbia (67 min.)	110
West of the Rio Grande—Monogram (59 min.)	not reviewed
Wilson—20th Century-Fox (155 min.)	128
Wing and a Prayer—20th Century-Fox (95 min.)	118

RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR FEATURES

Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

5010 Address Unknown—Paul Lukas	June 1
5043 They Live in Fear—Severn-Parrish	June 15
5208 The Last Horseman—Russell-Hayden (54 m.)	June 22
5040 She's a Soldier Too—Bondi-Barker	June 29
5019 Louisiana Hayride—Judy Canova	July 13
5008 Secret Command—O'Brien-Landis	July 20

5037 U-Boat Prisoner—Bruce-Bennett	July 25
5007 Mr. Winkle Goes to War—Robinson	Aug. 3
5027 Cry of the Werewolf—Massen-Crane	Aug. 17
5026 Soul of a Monster (formerly "Death Walks Alone")—Hobart-Bates	Aug. 17
5012 Kansas City Kitty—Davis-Crosby-Frazee	Aug. 24
Swing in the Saddle—Musical Western	Aug. 31
5002 The Impatient Years—Arthur-Bowman	Sept. 7
Ever Since Venus—Savage-Hunter	Sept. 14
One Mysterious Night—Morris-Carter	Sept. 19
Carolina Blues—Kyser-Miller	Sept. 26
The Unwritten Code—Savage-Neal	Sept. 28

(More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

Cowboy from Lonesome River—Starrett.... Sept. 21

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

Block 7

424 Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble—Rooney	May
425 Gaslight—Boyer-Bergman-Cotten	May
426 Meet the People—Ball-Powell	May
427 Three Men in White—Barrymore	June
428 Two Girls and a Sailor—James-Durante	June

Block 8

429 Bathing Beauty—Skelton-Williams	July
430 The Canterville Ghost—O'Brien-Young	July

Specials

466 Tunisian Victory—Documentary	April 28
491 White Cliffs of Dover—Marshal-Dunne	June

(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

Block 9

The Seventh Cross—Tracy-Gurie	September
Barbary Coast Gent—Wallace Beery	September
Maisie Goes to Reno—Sothorn-Hodiak	September
Waterloo Bridge—Taylor-Leigh (reissue)	September
Marriage is a Private Affair—Turner-Craig	October
Kismet—Colman-Dietrich	October
Mrs. Parkington—Garson-Pidgeon	November
Naughty Marietta—McD'nd-Eddy (reissue)	Novem.
Lost in a Harem—Abbott & Costello	December

Specials

Dragon Seed—Hepburn-Huston	August
An American Romance—Donlevy	October

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

312 Follow the Leader—East Side Kids	June 3
365 Sonora Stage Coach—Trail Blazers (59 m.)	June 10
319 Return of the Ape Man—Lugosi-Carradine (re)	June 24
355 Range Law—J. M. Brown (58 m.)	July 1
304 Johnny Doesn't Live Here Anymore—Simon-Ellison-Terry	July 8
305 Are These Our Parents?—Neill-Vinson	July 8
Trail Blazers (59 m.) (re)	July 15
323 Three of a Kind—Gilbert-Howard	July 22
356 West of the Rio Grande—J. M. Brown (59 m.)	Aug. 5
366 Marked Trails (formerly "Trigger Law")—Call of the Jungle—Ann Corio (re)	Aug. 19
325 Leave It to the Irish—Dunn-McKay (re)	Aug. 26
367 The Utah Kid—Trail Blazers	Aug. 26
306 Oh, What a Night—Lowe-Parker (re)	Sept. 2
324 Black Magic—Sidney Toler	Sept. 9
313 Block Busters—East Side Kids	Sept. 16
357 Land of the Outlaws—J. M. Brown	Sept. 30

(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

Shadows of Suspicion—Weaver-Ryan	Sept. 23
A Wave, A Wac, and a Marine—Youngman	Sept. 30
When Strangers Marry—Jagger-Hamilton	Oct. 7

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 6

- 4326 Hail the Conquering Hero—Bracken-Raines.....
 4327 Take it Big—Haley-Hilliard.....
 4328 Henry Aldrich's Little Secret—Lydon-Smith.....
 4329 I Love a Soldier—Goddard-Tufts.....
 4330 The Great Moment—McCrea-Field.....

Specials

- 4335 Going My Way—Crosby-Fitzgerald.....
 4336 Lady in the Dark—Rogers-Milland.....
 4337 The Story of Dr. Wassell—Cooper-Day.....
 4338 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman.....
 4332 Sign of the Cross—Landi-March (reissue).....

(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season**Block 1**

- Rainbow Island—Lamour-Bracken.....
 Till We Meet Again—Milland-Britton.....
 National Barn Dance—Quigley-Heather.....
 Our Hearts Were Young and Gay—Lynn-Russell...
 Dark Mountain—Lowery-Drew.....

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

1943-44

- 457 Spook Town—Texas Rangers No. 7 (59 m.) June 3
 415 Waterfront—Carradine-Naish.....June 10
 465 Fuzzy Settles Down—Buster Crabbe
 No. 7 (60 m.).....July 25
 458 Brand of the Devil—Texas Rangers
 No. 8 (61 m.).....July 30
 404 Minstrel Man—Fields-George (reset).....Aug. 1
 417 Seven Doors to Death—Chandler-Clyde (re) Aug. 5
 416 Delinquent Daughters—Carlson-D'Orsay
 (re).....Aug. 10
 421 Machine Gun Mam—Armida-El Brendel
 (re).....Aug. 18
 466 Rustler's Hideout—Buster Crabbe No. 8....Sept. 2
 41PS When the Lights Go On Again—
 Lydon-Mitchell.....Sept. 15
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 505 Dixie Jamboree—Langford-Kibee.....Aug. 15
 513 Castle of Crimes—Kent-Churchill.....Aug. 25
 509 Swing Hostess—Tilton-Adrian.....Sept. 8
 551 Gangsters of the Frontier—Texas Rangers
 No. 1.....Sept. 21

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

- 342 Cowboy and the Senorita—Roy Rogers
 (78 m.).....May 12
 3304 Melody Trail—Gene Autry (reissue).....June 1
 317 Silent Partner—Henry-Withers.....June 9
 320 Goodnight Sweetheart—Livingston-Terry...June 17
 343 Yellow Rose of Texas—Roy Rogers (69 m.) June 24
 318 Man From Frisco—O'Shea-Shirley.....July 1
 319 Call of the South Seas—Martin-Lane.....July 7
 356 Call of the Rockies—Burnette-Carson (56 m.) July 14
 3305 Comin' Round the Mountain—Autry (re)...July 15
 321 Secrets of Scotland Yard—Barrier-Bachelor..July 26
 325 Three Little Sisters—Lee-Terry-Walker....July 31
 322 The Girl Who Dared—Gray-Cookson.....Aug. 5
 324 Port of 40 Thieves—Bachelor-Powers....Aug. 13
 344 Song of Nevada—Roy Rogers (74 m.).....Aug. 5
 326 Strangers in the Night—Terry-Grey.....Sept. 12
 (More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 3311 Tucson Raiders—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.)....May 14
 3312 Marshal of Reno—Elliott-Blake (56 m.)....July 2
 461 Silver City Kid—Lane-Stewart (55 m.)....July 20
 451 Bordertown Trail—Burnette-Carson (56 m.) Aug. 11
 401 Sing, Neighbor, Sing—Taylor-Terry.....Aug. 12
 3313 San Antonio Kid—Elliott-Stirling.....Aug. 16
 462 Stagecoach to Monterey—Lane-Stewart...Sept. 15

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 6

- 426 Gildersleeve's Ghost—Harold Peary.....
 427 Marine Raiders—O'Brien-Ryan.....
 428 A Night of Adventure—Tom Conway.....
 429 Step Lively—Sinatra-Murphy-DeHaven.....
 430 Youth Runs Wild—Smith-Granville.....

Block 7

- 431 Falcon in Mexico—Tom Conway.....
 432 Music in Manhattan—Shirley-Day.....
 433 Mademoiselle Fifi—Simon-Krueger.....
 434 Bride by Mistake—Day-Marshall.....
 435 Heavenly Days—Fibber and Molly.....

Specials

- 451 The North Star—Baxter-Huston.....
 452 Up in Arms—Danny Kaye.....
 492 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (reissue).....
 461 Goyescas—Spanish production.....
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44**Block 11**

- 429 Eve of St. Mark—O'Shea-Baxter.....June
 430 Ladies of Washington—Graham-Marshall.....June
 431 Roger Touhy, Gangster—Foster-McLaglen.....July
 432 Candlelight in Algeria—English cast.....July
 433 Home in Indiana—McCallister-Haver.....July

Special

- Song of Bernadette—Jennifer Jones.....not set
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season**Block 1**

- 501 Take It or Leave It—Phil Baker.....August
 502 Wing and a Prayer—Ameche-Andrews.....August

Block 2

- 503 Sweet and Lowdown—Goodman-Bari.....September
 504 Dangerous Journey—Travelogue.....September
 505 Greenwich Village—Ameche-Bendix.....September
 Special
 Wilson—Knox-Fitzgerald.....Not set

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Lumber Jack—Hopalong Cassidy (64 m.).....Apr. 28
 Up in Mabel's Room—O'Keefe-Reynolds.....Apr. 28
 Mystery Man—Hopalong Cassidy (58 m.).....May 31
 Song of the Open Road—Jane Powell.....June 2
 The Hairy Ape—Bendix-Hayward.....June 16
 Forty Thieves—Hopalong Cassidy (60 m.).....June 23
 Sensations of 1945—Powell-O'Keefe.....June 30
 Summer Storm—Darnell-Sanders.....July 14
 Abroad with Two Yanks—Bendix-O'Keefe.....Aug. 4
 Since You Went Away—All-star cast.....Not set

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

1943-44

- 8012 This is the Life—O'Connor-Foster.....June 2
 8008 The Invisible Man's Revenge—Hall-Ankers...June 9
 8015 Ghost Catchers—Olsen & Johnson.....June 16
 8043 South of Dixie—Gwynne-Bruce.....June 23
 8002 Christmas Holiday—Durbin-Kelly.....June 30
 8018 Jungle Woman—Acquanetta-Naish.....July 7
 8086 Trigger Trail—Rod Cameron.....July 7
 8039 The Mummy's Ghost—Chaney-Carradine...July 7
 8045 Twilight on the Prairie—Quillan-Errol.....July 14
 8040 Allergic to Love—O'Driscoll-Bruce.....July 21
 8087 Trail to Gunsight—Eddie Dew.....Aug. 18
 8001 In Society—Abbott & Costello.....Aug. 18
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- Gypsy Wildcat—Montez-Hall.....Sept. 1
 Moonlight & Cactus—Andrews Sisters.....Sept. 9
 The Merry Monahans—O'Connor-Ryan.....Sept. 15
 Pearl of Death—Rathbone-Bruce.....Sept. 22
 San Diego, I Love You—Allbritton-Hall.....Sept. 29
 The Singing Sheriff—Norris-McKenzie.....Oct. 6
 See My Lawyer—Olsen & Johnson.....Oct. 13
 The Climax—Foster-Karloff.....Oct. 20

Warner Brothers Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

1943-44

- 317 Make Your Own Bed—Carson-Wyman.....June 10
 224 This is the Army—Leslie-Murphy (re-release).....June 24
 318 The Mask of Dimitrios—Greenstreet-Lorre.....July 1
 341 Manpower—Dietrich-Raft—(reissue).....July 15
 342 They Made Me a Criminal—Garfield-Sheridan
 (reissue).....July 15
 343 Brother Rat—Lane-Morris.....July 15
 344 The Walking Dead—Karloff-Cortez (reissue).....July 15
 345 Tiger Shark—Robinson-Arlen (reissue).....July 15
 346 Polo Joe—Joe E. Brown (reissue).....July 15
 315 The Adventures of Mark Twain—March.....July 22
 319 Mr. Skeffington—Davis-Rains.....Aug. 12
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 401 Janie—Reynolds-Arnold-Harding.....Sept. 2
 402 Crime By Night—Cowan-Wyman.....Sept. 9

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE**Columbia—One Reel****1943-44**

- 5860 Screen Snapshots No. 10 (9½ m.).....June 2
 5708 Tangled Travels—Phantasies (7 m.).....June 9
 5504 The Disillusioned Bluebird—Color Rhap.
 (re) (7 m.).....June 15
 5809 Mat Maulers—Sports (9 m.).....June 19
 5662 Community Sings No. 12 (10½ m.).....June 30
 5709 Mr. Fore by Fore—Phantasies (6½ m.).....July 7
 5603 A Peekoolyar Sitcheeyashun—Li'l Abner
 (7 m.).....July 28
 5810 G.I. Sports—Sports (10 m.).....July 28
 5710 Case of the Screaming Bishop—
 Phantasies (7 m.).....Aug. 4
 5754 Mr. Moocher—Fox & Crow (7½ m.).....Sept. 8
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 6701 Mutton Bones—Phantasy.....Aug. 25
 6851 Screen Snapshots No. 1 (10 m.).....Aug. 25
 6651 Community Sings No. 1 (9½ m.).....Aug. 25
 6951 Kehoe's Marimba Band—Film-Vodvil
 (11 m.).....Sept. 1
 6801 K-9-Kadets—Sports (10½ m.).....Sept. 8
 6852 Screen Snapshots No. 2.....Sept. 22
 6652 Community Sings No. 2.....Sept. 29
 6601 Porkular Piggy—Li'l Abner.....Oct. 6
 6802 Over the Jumps—Sports.....Oct. 13
 6952 The Rootin' Tootin' Band—Film-Vodvil.....Oct. 20
 6751 Be Patient, Patient—Fox & Crow.....Oct. 27

Columbia—Two Reels**1943-44**

- 5436 You Were Never Uglier—Clyde (18 m.).....June 2
 5423 Mopey Dopey—Brendel (16½ m.).....June 16
 5140 The Twin Brothers—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....July 7
 5412 His Hotel Sweet—Herbert (17½ m.).....July 9
 5141 The Evil Eye—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....July 14
 5408 Idle Roomers—Stooges (16½ m.).....July 16
 5142 Mark of the Scimitar—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....July 21
 5424 Pick a Peck of Plumbers—Howard-Brendel
 (17 min.).....July 23
 5143 A Caliph's Treachery—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....July 28
 5144 Secret of the Palace—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Aug. 4
 5145 Feast of the Beggars—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Aug. 11
 5146 Double of Jeopardy—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Aug. 18
 5147 The Slave Traders—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Aug. 25
 5148 The Underground River—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.).....Sept. 1
 5149 The Faithful Wheel—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Sept. 8
 5150 Mystery of the Mosque—Desert Hawk
 (18 m.).....Sept. 15
 5151 Hand of Vengeance—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Sept. 22
 5152 Sword of Fate—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Sept. 29
 5153 The Wizard's Story—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Oct. 6
 5154 Triumph of Kasim—Desert Hawk (18 m.).....Oct. 13
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 6425 Wedded Bliss—Billy Gilbert (17 m.).....Aug. 18
 6426 Gold is Where You Lose it—Clyde
 (16½ m.).....Sept. 1
 6401 Gents Without Cents—Stooges.....Sept. 22
 6421 Strife of the Party—Vera Vague.....Oct. 6

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel

- T-519 Roaming Through Arizona—Travel (10 m.) June 3
 W-535 The Tree Surgeon—Cartoon (8 m.).....June 3
 M-588 Somewhere, U.S.A.—Miniature (10 m.).....June 3
 T-520 City of Brigham Young—Travel. (10 m.).....June 17
 W-536 Happy-Go-Nutty—Cartoon (7 m.).....June 24
 S-555 Movie Pests—Pete Smith (10 m.).....July 8
 K-572 Grandpa Called it Art—Pass. Parade
 (10 m.).....July 15
 W-537 The Bodyguard—Cartoon (7 m.).....July 22
 T-521 Monumental Utah—Traveltalk (9 m.).....July 29
 S-556 Sports Quiz—Pete Smith.....Sept. 2
 W-538 Bear Raid Warden—Cartoon.....Sept. 9

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels

- X-510 Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.)....Jan. 1

Paramount—One Reel

- J3-5 Popular Science No. 5 (10 m.).....June 2
 R3-8 Speed Couriers—Sportlight (9 m.).....June 9
 L3-5 Unusual Occupations No. 5 (10 m.).....June 23
 D3-5 Lucky Lulu—Little Lulu (9 m.).....June 30
 R3-9 Catch 'em and Eat 'em—Sportlight (10 m.).....July 7
 Y3-5 In a Harem—Speak. of Animals (9 m.).....July 14
 E3-5 Spinach Packin' Popeye (7 m.).....July 21
 U3-6 Jasper Goes Hunting—Madcap Models
 (7 m.).....July 28
 J3-6 Popular Science No. 6 (10 m.).....Aug. 4
 E3-6 Puppet Love—Popeye (7 m.).....Aug. 11
 D3-6 It's Nifty to be Thrifty—Little Lulu (8 m.).....Aug. 18
 R3-10 Furlough Fishing—Sportlight (9 m.).....Aug. 25
 E3-7 Pitching Woo at the Zoo—Popeye.....Sept. 1
 L3-6 Unusual Occupations No. 6.....Sept. 1
 D3-7 I'm just Curious—Little Lulu.....Sept. 8
 Y3-6 Monkey Business—Speak. of Animals.....Sept. 15
 E3-8 Moving Aweigh—Popeye.....Sept. 22
 D3-8 Indoor Outing—Little Lulu.....Sept. 29
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Paramount—Two Reels

- FF3-4 Showboat Serenade—Musical Parade (20m.) Apr. 14
 FF3-5 Fun Time—Musical Parade (20 m.).....June 16
 FF3-6 Halfway to Heaven—Musical Parade (19m) Aug. 25
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Republic—Two Reels

- 383 The Tiger Woman—Stirling-Lane
 (12 episodes).....May 27
 384 Haunted Harbor—Kay Aldrich
 (15 episodes).....June 30

RKO—One Reel**1943-44**

- 44310 Boys Camp—Sportscope (8 m.).....May 19
 44311 Boot and Spur—Sportscope (8 m.).....June 16
 44312 Ski Chase—Sportscope (8 m.).....July 14
 (More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 54101 Springtime for Pluto—Disney (7 m.).....June 23
 54102 The Plastic Inventor—Disney (7 m.).....July 21

RKO—Two Reels

- 43108 Hot Money—This is America (17 m.).....June 2
 43706 Girls, Girls, Girls—Leon Errol (17 m.).....June 9
 43406 The Kitchen Cynic—Edgar Kennedy
 (18 m.).....June 23
 43109 They Fight Again—This is America
 (17 m.).....June 30
 43110 Rockefeller Center—This is America
 (17 m.).....July 28
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel**1943-44**

- 4902 Coney Island—Lew Lehr Makes the News
 (9 m.) (re).....May 26
 4517 Wolf! Wolf!—Terrytoon (6 m.).....June 2
 4351 Nymphs of the Lake—Sports (9 m.) (re).....June 9
 4518 Eliza on the Ice—Terrytoon (6 m.).....June 16
 4304 Students of Form—Sports (9 m.).....June 30
 4519 The Green Line—Terrytoon (6 m.).....July 7
 4352 Ski Slops—Sports (9 m.).....July 21
 4520 Carmen's Veranda—Terrytoon (7 m.).....July 28
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel (continued)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

5251 Mexican Majesty—Adventure	Aug. 4
5501 The Cat Came Back—Terrytoon	Aug. 18
5252 Jewels of Iran—Adventure	Aug. 25
5502 The Two Barbers—Terrytoon	Sept. 1
5351 Blue Grass Gentleman—Sports	Sept. 15
5503 Ghost Town—Terrytoon	Sept. 22
5253 Mystic India—Adventure	Sept. 29
5504 Sultan's Birthday—Terrytoon	Oct. 13

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

Vol. 10 No. 11—Back Door to Tokyo— March of Time (19 m.) (re.)	June 23
Vol. 10 No. 12—Americans Oll—March of Time (17 m.)	July 14
Vol. 10 No. 13—British Imperialism— March of Time	Aug. 11

(End of 1943-44 Season)

Universal—One Reel

8239 Fish Fry—Cartune (7 m.)	June 19
8380 The Honest Forger—Per. Odd. (9 m.)	June 19
8381 Spinning a Yarn—Per. Odd. (9 m.)	Aug. 7
8361 Bear Mountain Game—Var. Views (9 m.) (re)	Aug. 14
8234 Abou Ben Boogie—Cartune (7 m.) (re)	Sept. 18
8382 Idol of the Crowd—Per. Odd. (9 m.) (re)	Sept. 18
8362 From Spruce to Bomber—Var. Views (9 m.) (re)	Sept. 25

Universal—Two Reels**1943-44**

8887 Crashing Timbers—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 7 (20 m.)	June 6
8888 In a Flaming Plane—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 8 (20 m.)	June 13
8130 Pagliacci Swings it—Musical (15 m.)	June 14
8889 Hurtling Through Space—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 9 (20 m.)	June 20
8890 Tricked by a Booby Trap—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 10 (20 m.)	June 27
8891 The Tunnel of Terror—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 11 (20 m.)	July 4
8892 Electrocuted—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 12 (20 min.)	July 11
8893 The Boomerang—Great Alaskan Mystery No. 13 (20 m.)	July 18
8131 Midnight Melodies—Musical (15 m.)	July 19
8132 Swingtime Holiday—Musical (15 min.)	Sept. 20

(More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

9781 Raiders of Ghost City—Serial	July 25
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Vitaphone—One Reel**1943-44**

9511 Colorado Trout—Sports (10 m.)	July 1
9609 Junior Dive Bombers—Mel. Mas. (10 m.)	July 1
9711 Brother Rat—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	July 15
9312 The Cat Came Back—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7m)	July 15
9406 Thowing the Bull—Varieties (10 m.) (re)	July 22
9724 Hare Force—Bugs Bunny (7 m.) (re)	July 22
9610 Listen to the Bands—Mel. Mas. (10 m.)	July 29
9513 Bluenose Schooner—Sports (10 m.) (re)	Aug. 5
9714 From Hand to Mouse—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Aug. 5
9512 Champions of the Future—Sports (10 m.)	Aug. 12
9313 Isle of Pingo Pongo—Mer. Mel. (reissue) (7 m.)	Aug. 19
9713 Birdy and the Beast—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Aug. 19
9725 Buckaroo Bugs—Bugs Bunny (7 m.)	Aug. 26
9715 Goldilocks Jivin' Bears—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Sept. 2
9712 Plane Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Sept. 16
9716 Lost and Foundling—Mer. Mel. (7 m.)	Sept. 30

(More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

1401 Their Dizzy Day—Varieties	Sept. 2
1601 Bob Willis & Texas Playboys—Mel. Mas.	Sept. 2
1301 Let it be Me—Cartoon	Sept. 16
1302 September in the Rain—Cartoon	Sept. 30

Vitaphone—Two Reels**1943-44**

9106 Halls of Montezuma—Featurette (20 m.)	July 8
9004 Devil Boats—Special (20 m.) (re)	Aug. 12
9006 Musical Movieland—Special (20 m.)	Sept. 9

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

1101 I am an American—Featurette	Sept. 23
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NEWSWEEKLY**NEW YORK****RELEASE DATES****Pathe News**

451101 Sat. (O)	Aug. 12
452102 Wed. (E)	Aug. 16
451103 Sat. (O)	Aug. 19
452104 Wed. (E)	Aug. 23

(End of

1943-44 Season)

**Beginning of
1944-45 Season**

55101 Sat. (O)	Aug. 26
55202 Wed. (E)	Aug. 30
55103 Sat. (O)	Sept. 2
55204 Wed. (E)	Sept. 6
55105 Sat. (O)	Sept. 9
55206 Wed. (E)	Sept. 13
55107 Sat. (O)	Sept. 16
55208 Wed. (E)	Sept. 20
55109 Sat. (O)	Sept. 23
55210 Wed. (E)	Sept. 27
55111 Sat. (O)	Sept. 30
55212 Wed. (E)	Oct. 4

Paramount News

98 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 10
99 Sunday (O)	Aug. 13
100 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 17
101 Sunday (O)	Aug. 20
102 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 24
103 Sunday (O)	Aug. 27
104 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 31

(End of

1943-1944 Season)

**Beginning of
1944-45 Season**

1 Sunday (O)	Sept. 3
2 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 7
3 Sunday (O)	Sept. 10
4 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 14
5 Sunday (O)	Sept. 17
6 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 21
7 Sunday (O)	Sept. 24
8 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 28
9 Sunday (O)	Oct. 1
10 Thurs. (E)	Oct. 5

Metrotone News

297 Tues. (O)	Aug. 15
298 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 17
299 Tues. (O)	Aug. 22
300 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 24
301 Tues. (O)	Aug. 29
302 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 31
303 Tues. (O)	Sept. 5

(End of

1943-44 Season)

**Beginning of
1944-45 Season**

200 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 7
201 Tues. (O)	Sept. 12
202 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 14
203 Tues. (O)	Sept. 19
204 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 21
205 Tues. (O)	Sept. 26
206 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 28
207 Tues. (O)	Oct. 3

Fox Movietone

98 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 10
99 Tues. (O)	Aug. 15
100 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 17
101 Tues. (O)	Aug. 22
102 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 24
103 Tues. (O)	Aug. 29
104 Thurs. (E)	Aug. 31

(End of

1943-44 Season)

**Beginning of
1944-45 Season**

1 Tues. (O)	Sept. 5
2 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 7
3 Tues. (O)	Sept. 12
4 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 14
5 Tues. (O)	Sept. 19
6 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 21
7 Tues. (O)	Sept. 26
8 Thurs. (E)	Sept. 28
9 Tues. (O)	Oct. 3

Universal

318 Fri. (E)	Aug. 11
319 Wed. (O)	Aug. 16
320 Fri. (E)	Aug. 18
321 Wed. (O)	Aug. 23
322 Fri. (E)	Aug. 25
323 Wed. (O)	Aug. 30
324 Fri. (E)	Sept. 1
325 Wed. (O)	Sept. 6
326 Fri. (E)	Sept. 8
327 Wed. (O)	Sept. 13
328 Fri. (E)	Sept. 15
329 Wed. (O)	Sept. 20
330 Fri. (E)	Sept. 22
331 Wed. (O)	Sept. 27
332 Fri. (E)	Sept. 29
333 Wed. (O)	Oct. 4

All American News

94 Friday	Aug. 11
95 Friday	Aug. 18
96 Friday	Aug. 25
97 Friday	Sept. 1
98 Friday	Sept. 8
99 Friday	Sept. 15
100 Friday	Sept. 22
101 Friday	Sept. 29
102 Friday	Oct. 6

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1944

No. 35

The "Marginal" Exhibitor Must Be Saved

In this paper's July 15 issue, under the heading, "Want in the Midst of Plenty," I stated that the New Ritz Theatre in Philadelphia was compelled to shut down because of high film rentals.

Some distributor representatives have challenged the accuracy of this statement. They have not denied that the rentals the New Ritz's owner had to pay were exorbitant; they have merely objected to the statement that he was compelled to close down because of high film rentals. They contended that he had closed his theatre for the purpose of remodelling.

The information on which I based my editorial was furnished to me by a trusted Philadelphia friend, whose reports to me in the past had always proved accurate.

To clear the atmosphere, I instituted an independent investigation, which convinced me that the facts and circumstances of the closing of the New Ritz are substantially as set forth in a letter sent to me on August 16 by Mr. Thomas Lazarick, owner of the theatre. Mr. Lazarick's letter reads in part:

"Dear Mr. Harrison:

"Since your wonderful article 'Want in the Midst of Plenty' was printed, I have been the target of an underhanded campaign. I thought when you mentioned my theatre it was just an example of the many other small exhibitors like me.

"Let me tell you what has happened to me. I have been an independent exhibitor for 15 years. During that time all the members in my family have worked hard with me. Now both my sons are in the army, and I have been left to run the theatre with the help of some of my daughters. The doctor told me that I'm a sick man and that I shouldn't work too hard, but now I have to do all the managing and also work in the operating booth many times a week.

"The exchanges talk a lot about helping the little fellow, but all the help I ever got was higher and higher film prices. I tried to get adjustments but only Metro helped me before I had to close my theatre.

"The theatre closed on June 11 and then my wife started to worry very much about what was going to happen to all of us. So with her help we managed to borrow \$1,000 for fixing and to have some money to open up again. So the last week in June, I, and some school boys, and my manager, did all the work ourselves, except that I had to have help on graining and I got three grainers for one day. Mr. Harrison, that was the only outside help we had.

"When the exchange men on Vine Street read your article they got all excited and they started to attack me. One fellow said I closed to repair. Do you think a theatre can be repaired for \$1,000? Another fellow said I closed to cut down my losses in the summer. Do you think that I would have opened up again on July 23 in the hottest summer I can remember, if that was true? The fact is I closed because I had to, and opened because if I hadn't I and my family would have lost everything we had worked for all these years.

"I want to tell you Mr. Harrison that I had to close my theatre. I like this business and I have spent a lot of time in it. But the way the exchanges are squeezing us little fellows it won't be long now, unless more people like you help us."

In connection with this matter, I wish to reproduce another letter. It is from Bill Rodgers, of MGM, dated July 24:

"My dear Pete:

"The writer refers to your July 15 issue, and in particular, the article 'WANT IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY.'

"It would seem to me that before you would condemn distributors as a whole you would want to investigate the situation, and had you done so you would have found that so far as our company is concerned, every possible cooperation was extended to the management of the New Ritz Theatre, hence, their closing, so far as we are concerned, was not because of high film rentals.

"With kindest regards."

The purpose of the editorial in question was not to condemn any specific distributor for causing the New Ritz to close; its primary purpose was to call attention to the plight of the thousands of "marginal" exhibitors, the New Ritz being only an isolated example. Consequently, I made no effort to determine which distributors were helping the New Ritz and which distributors were oppressing it. Now that an issue has been made of the New Ritz specifically, I am happy to report that, as indicated in Mr. Lazarick's letter, MGM had been helpful to this unfortunate exhibitor, and is still giving him its full cooperation. Once more MGM has illustrated that it stands behind Bill Rodgers' promises that his company would do everything possible to keep theatres open when business is poor.

I wish to make it clear again that the purpose of my July 15 editorial was not to take up the cudgels in behalf of an individual exhibitor, but to point out a general condition that exists among thousands of exhibitors throughout the country. The case of the New Ritz served merely as an illustration of what thousands of "marginal" exhibitors—theatre owners, who, through no fault of their own, continuously find themselves on the borderline between profit and loss—have to contend with as a result of the distributors' relentless demands for more and more percentage deals and preferred playing time, without the slightest regard for the theatres' inability to meet these demands.

The "marginal" exhibitor suffers few ills that could not be cured by film rentals that are commensurate with his intake, yet with each succeeding season he finds himself confronted by salesmen who seek to increase the severity of their terms in an effort to surpass their previous years' sales records.

Shifting populations; higher overheads; the refusal of patrons to pay advanced admission prices; the inability to maintain quality programs, because of the artificial product shortage caused by extended runs and moveovers; playing pictures after they had been "milked" dry; and the loss of patronage from regular customers who can now afford to attend the more expensive first runs, are but a few of the adverse conditions under which the "marginal" exhibitor is compelled to operate. But the salesmen and branch managers, in their mad scramble to appease the home office executives, refuse to recognize the existence of these conditions.

Periodically, usually at convention time, the sales executives of the different distributing companies come out with glowing statements of their willingness to help exhibitors in distress. Instead of merely expressing a willingness to be "charitable" to exhibitors in distress, these executives should make an honest effort to correct the burdensome conditions that prevent the "marginal" exhibitors from operating at a profit. If they should do this, the "marginal" exhibitor will cease being an object of charity.

The New Ritz Theatre has become the symbol of the thousands of "marginal" exhibitors in this country. What happens to the New Ritz will be indicative of what will happen to the others.

(Continued on last page)

"Kismet" with Ronald Colman, Marlene Dietrich and Edward Arnold

(MGM, October; time, 100 min.)

This Technicolor re-make of "Kismet," which was first produced by Robertson-Cole in 1920, and a second time by First National in 1930, is an extremely lavish fantasy, breath-taking in its dazzling Oriental splendor. As entertainment, however, it is only fair, for the story lacks substantial emotional appeal, and the action is somewhat tedious. If you have seen or played any of the Technicolor phantasies produced recently by Universal with Maria Montez and Jon Hall, you should be able to tell how well this picture will go over in your house, for the treatment is similar, although on a more lavish scale. The story, which takes place in ancient Bagdad, is pretty much the same as those of the previous versions, with the action revolving around a rascally but ingratiating beggar, whose artful maneuvers in an effort to marry his daughter to a prince lead him into a series of escapades that nearly cost him his head. Ronald Colman, as the beggar, makes a charming rascal, while Marlene Dietrich, as the harem Queen he woos, is properly exotic, even though her age is beginning to show. The others in the cast perform well:—

Hafiz (Ronald Colman), a rascally beggar and magician, aspires to make his lovely daughter, Marsinah (Joy Ann Page), the bride of a "prince." Unknown to Hafiz, Marsinah had been romancing with a gardener's son (James Craig), who, in reality, was the Caliph of Bagdad in disguise. Hafiz, posing as the "Prince of Hassir," ruler of a fictitious province, had been carrying on a clandestine romance with Jamilla (Marlene Dietrich), Queen of the castle of the Grand Vizier (Edward Arnold), who had incurred the Caliph's wrath because of his excessive taxation of the people. To have Jamilla to himself, and at the same time fulfill his boast to his daughter, Hafiz steals expensive garments from a bazaar and visits the Vizier as the "Prince of Hassir." He persuades him to consider making Marsinah his new Queen. But before he can present Marsinah, Hafiz is arrested for the robbery and brought before the Vizier. The latter decrees that his hands be lopped off. Thinking quickly, Hafiz offers to kill the Caliph if the Vizier would set him free and marry his daughter. The Vizier agrees. Performing tricks of magic before the Caliph, Hafiz fails in an attempt to stab him. He eludes the guards and, to keep Marsinah from being involved in the assassination plot, rushes to the Vizier's castle to take her away. There, he murders several guards and kills the Vizier himself just as the Caliph's soldiers apprehend him. When the Caliph learns that Marsinah was Hafiz's daughter, he pardons the rascal and makes him a real prince, with the understanding that he must leave Bagdad forever. Pleased that his daughter would marry the Caliph, Hafiz, accompanied by Marlene, leaves Bagdad, perfectly reconciled to his fate.

John Meehan wrote the screen play based upon the play by Edward Knoblock. Everett Riskin produced it, and William Dieterle directed it. The cast includes Hugh Herbert, Harry Davenport, Hobart Cavanaugh and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"One Mysterious Night" with Chester Morris

(Columbia; Sept. 19; time, 63 min.)

A routine program crook melodrama. It is the latest in the series of "Boston Blackie" stories, with the same players enacting the parts they did in the previous pictures. In substance, it is practically identical to the other pictures, with Chester Morris, as the reformed criminal, working on the side of law and order. For the most part, the story is far-fetched. As a matter of fact, the plot developments are so illogical that some of the situations may be greeted with derision by the spectator. For comedy, the usual situations involving dumb detectives are employed:—

Stumped by the robbery of a famous diamond from an exhibit, Police Inspector Richard Lane calls in Chester Morris, a reformed criminal, to help him solve the crime. Morris, accompanied by George Stone, his pal, disguises himself as an elderly college professor, and visits the exhibit. He has little difficulty ascertaining that Robert Scott, the exhibit's manager, was the thief. Promising him leniency if he would return the jewel, Morris arranges to meet Scott on a street corner. Scott arrives at the appointed time only to be shot down by Robert Williams and William Wright, two crooks with whom he had been in league. The crooks compel Morris and Stone to accompany them to their hideout. Morris' disappearance leads the police to believe that

he had murdered Scott and had absconded with the jewel. Meanwhile Morris, tricks the crooks into believing that the gem they had in their possession was paste, and that the real one was in the exhibit's safe. Perturbed, the crooks tie up Morris and Stone, and take the jewel to a "fence" for an appraisal. Morris and Stone free themselves and start out in pursuit. They call the police and urge them to speed to the "fence's" place. As the police arrive, the two crooks kill the "fence" and escape. Morris and Stone find themselves taken into custody. They escape, and return to the hideout, where they tie themselves up before the crooks return. Holding Stone as hostage, the crooks give Morris the diamond and demand that he replace it with the real one in the exhibit's safe. Morris delivers the gem to the police, who return with him to the hideout, where they capture the thieves and rescue Stone.

Paul Yawitz wrote the screen play, Ted Richmond produced it, and Oscar Boetticher, Jr., directed it. The cast includes Janis Carter, Joseph Crehan and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

CLEARING THE ATMOSPHERE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION

(Continued from back page)

Under the title, "Circuit Deals," Mr. Myers points out that the Department adopted the Independent Conference's recommendation that the licensing of films in one theatre or group of theatres shall not be conditioned upon the licensing of films in another theatre or group of theatres. He adds that this provision, too, will be enforceable by contempt proceedings instead of by arbitration.

In his discussion of "Clearance," Mr. Myers has this to say:

"The proposed changes in Sec. VIII are even more drastic than those proposed by the Independent Conference, but have the virtue of importing into the proceedings Sherman Law tests which reinforce their validity.

"In accordance with the Independents' recommendation, the paragraph reciting, 'It is recognized that clearance . . . is essential,' would be eliminated.

"While the Department did not adopt the formula proposed by the Conference, it proposes provisions which are equally effective except, perhaps, in their effect on move-overs. In lieu of the language eliminated, as aforesaid, the Department proposes the following:

"Clearance shall be deemed to be unreasonable whenever its effect is to restrain competition between two or more theatres unreasonably."

"And the Department would put at rest the mooted question whether an arbitrator can abolish all clearance between the contending theatres by proposing the following clause:

"An award providing that a theatre holding clearance found to be unreasonable should take no clearance over the complainant's theatre may be made regardless of whether or not there is substantial competition between said theatres."

"So that there may be no doubt as to the power of an arbitrator in a proper case to eliminate all clearance, the Government further proposes the elimination of the provision which says that 'no award . . . shall restrict the exhibitor's right to license for any theatre or any run which he is able to negotiate with the distributor, nor the distributor's right to license for any theatre any run that it desires to grant.' This language actually conferred no rights on either party but it did serve to confuse the arbitrators and to influence them unduly in making their awards."

Analyzing the anti-discrimination provision, Mr. Myers has this to say:

"The Government proposes that the unworkable and futile Sec. IX (arbitrary withholding of prints) and the equally unrealistic and ineffective Sec. X (refusal to sell on desired run) be eliminated. As they now stand both are utterly worthless and their passing will cause no pain.

"In place of these discredited provisions the Department proposes a clearcut requirement that—

"No distributor defendant shall license or make available for exhibition in theatres any films released by it upon terms which have the effect of unreasonably restraining competition between two or more theatres in exhibiting said films."

"This is all embracing and if given full effect by the arbitrators would reach every form of discrimination practiced in favor of one exhibitor as against another where the effect was unreasonably to restrain competition between them. For example, it should provide a remedy for arbi-

trary discrimination in run, in allotting prints, in terms, in advertising and vaudeville allowances and every other form of arbitrary discrimination which is restrictive of fair and open competition.

"When we come to the proposed remedy we find a marked departure from anything heretofore proposed. The consent decree contemplates awards for specific relief (the doing or ceasing of certain acts or practices) rather than the awarding of monetary damages. The present proposal of the Government is:

"If the arbitrator finds that this section has been . . . violated, he shall make an award which . . . will require the payment of an amount by such defendant . . . which in his judgment will compensate the complainant for any pecuniary loss sustained as the result of such a violation . . . and discourage the recurrence of such violations."

"This section is much broader in its scope than the proposed substitute for Sec. X recommended by the Independent Conference. The independent draft was more specific in its relation to discrimination in run. An attempt was made by the Conference to bolster the provision relating to awards but it was recognized that any provision requiring specific performances was subject to evasion. There is no evading the payment of a monetary award.

"What the Government's proposal would really accomplish would be to afford a complaining exhibitor substantially the same right of action that he now enjoys under the anti-trust acts, but without the burden of proving, as a condition to a recovery, that the defendant distributors are engaged in contracts, combinations or conspiracies in restraint of interstate trade and commerce. That burden is almost unsupportable in most cases, since the exhibitors cannot command the services of the FBI in collecting evidence. All that an exhibitor would have to prove under the proposal would be the fact of the discriminatory practice and its effect on his ability to compete with the theatre which is the beneficiary of the practice.

"Of course, in an action under the anti-trust laws the judgment is for three times the damages suffered by the complainant. But the damages now proposed are not merely compensatory, but punitive, since one of the purposes is to 'discourage the recurrence of such violations.'

Regarding "Circuit Expansion," Mr. Myers asserts that Sec. XI was the most outrageous feature of the consent decree, for, while it purported to curb and relieve against monopoly, it actually permitted the consenting defendants to expand their theatre holdings. He points out that the proposals made by the distributors last winter regarding circuit expansion were even less restrictive than Sec. XI and, if accepted, "undoubtedly would have been followed by an orgy of theatre grabbing which would have been reminiscent of the pre-depression era." The Government's proposal that Sec. XI be eliminated in its entirety, and that there be substituted in its place an iron-clad prohibition against any further acquisition of theatres or any financial interest in them, is, according to Mr. Myers, consistent with the views and recommendations of the Independent Conference.

Reminding the reader that the declared purpose of the Government's suit was to divorce production and distribution from exhibition, Mr. Myers states that "the Government in its present proposals returns to first principles and proposes to dig out the very roots of the monopoly. It proposes that each defendant which is directly or indirectly engaged in the production, distribution and exhibition of films shall, within three years, 'completely divorce its exhibition business from its production and distribution business. . . . This contemplates complete separation of production and distribution, on the one hand, and exhibition on the other, but without breaking up the existing affiliated circuits.

"To relieve conditions in the areas in which the affiliated circuits have established monopoly, the Government further proposes that each defendant engaged in operating theatres shall, within such time and upon such terms as the Court may deem reasonable, divest itself of such theatre interests as the Court may in the course of supplemental proceedings find should be divested in order to insure theatre operating competition in the communities where they are now monopolizing theatre operation."

"Pooling arrangements between affiliated theatres are to be declared void and such pools enjoined in the future.

"As hereinbefore indicated, the propaganda machine is busy grinding out stories to the effect that theatre divorce means turning over the affiliated circuits to so-called 'independent' circuit operators whose competition has not been of the mildest variety. Those thus far named have troubles of their own. The Government won its suit to break up the Crescent Circuit and the case is pending in

the Supreme Court. The case against Schine started off auspiciously and will be resumed after the summer vacation. The case against Griffith will be the next to be tried. Hence it is not likely that the Department of Justice or the Court would sanction the transfer of the affiliated circuits to those interests.

"Opposed to the arguments offered by distributor representatives and tame cat exhibitors against theatre divorcement are the conclusions of the Department of Justice as expressed in a release covering the filing of the application. Speaking of the arbitration system the Department stated that it has reached the conclusion 'that such a system may not, by itself, be adequate to bring the operations of the defendants into conformity with the requirements of the Sherman Act.' Also, 'it believes that this objective may only be accomplished by a complete separation of their theatre-operating business from their producing and distributing activities and by the divestiture of a substantial number of theatres from the theatre-operating companies respectively owned by them.' This is not mere snap judgment; it is based on 'the results to date of that litigation (i.e. the consent decree) and the decisions of the Supreme Court in other Sherman Act cases since 1940,' all of which 'have reinforced the Department's original conclusion first expressed in its complaint filed in 1938, that conformity with the law requires such a modification of the industry's economic structure.'"

Elsewhere in his analysis Mr. Myers asserts that the Government's proposal to declare illegal and void existing franchises and to enjoin the making or enforcing of similar agreements, is the logical outcome of the decision in the Crescent Case. Regarding the prohibition against licensing films to an affiliated theatre upon terms that unreasonably restrain an unaffiliated theatre from competing with that theatre, Mr. Myers states that this provision "strikes at the very heart of the discrimination practiced by the distributors in the interest of their own theatres."

In concluding his analysis, Mr. Myers calls attention to the fact that the Government failed to adopt the Independent Conference's recommendations regarding forced percentage selling, distributor control of admission prices, and other competitive practices. "It is difficult to see," states Mr. Myers, "what will be accomplished by theatre divorcement if the distributors remain free to force themselves into unwelcome partnership with the independent exhibitors and exercise control over their operating policies by means of percentage contracts.

"Forced percentage may and probably should be the subject of a separate proceeding against the distributors—not merely the consenting distributors but all of them. The way for such a proceeding has been blazed by the decisions hereinbefore cited. The independent exhibitors should impress upon the Attorney General the need of an attack on forced percentage deals, not only to prevent the spread of the defendants' monopoly, but also to protect the public from gouging."

Mr. Myers' studied analysis sets forth clearly and concisely the motives of the Government's proposals for a modification of the decree. There can be no doubt in the mind of any one connected with the motion picture industry that the Government has tired of the consenting distributors' dilly-dallying, and that it is determined, not only to compel them to discontinue their monopolistic sales practices, but also to divest themselves of their theatres.

The Government's unprecedented action set the distributors back on their heels, but, as pointed out by Mr. Myers, they regained their balance and quickly set into motion their propaganda machine. Daily, the trade press carries statements from unnamed distributor spokesmen in which varied reasons are given as to why some of the Government's proposals would be ruinous to the exhibitors themselves. Lack of space in this issue prevents a discussion of the distributors' misleading claims, but suffice it to say that they have but one purpose—to create confusion within the ranks of the exhibitors as to whether or not the Government's action will prove beneficial to them. It is just such a purpose that Mr. Myers' analysis seeks to counteract, and, for that, he is entitled to the thanks of every independent exhibitor.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is confident of the Government's ability to break the producer-distributors' hold upon picture selling and exhibition. Pay no heed to the propagandists who would tell you that the Government's proposals will work to the detriment of the independent exhibitors. Having power and fearing to relinquish any of it, the producer-distributors have always been reluctant to institute reforms. But like it or not, it seems as if the Department of Justice is going to help them get rid of their reluctance.

Thus far, MGM is the only distributor that has rolled up its sleeves in a sincere effort to help. To this company HARRISON'S REPORTS expresses its commendation.

Some of the other distributors have promised to help, but as yet have done nothing about it. And some of them seem to be concerned only with the question of whether or not Mr. Lazarick, when he closed his theatre, had any hope of reopening it; they ignore completely the larger and more pressing aspect of the case, namely, the relief that is needed urgently by the New Ritz and by the thousands of theatres it stands for.

HARRISON'S REPORTS calls upon these distributors to pull their heads out of the sands and to recognize the situation for what it is, so that, with the exercise of some good faith and reasonable dealings, the "marginal" exhibitor may be saved. The fight for his continued existence has just begun. The progress of this fight, as reflected by the actions of the distributors in the case of the New Ritz Theatre, will be reported in these columns periodically.

CLEARING THE ATMOSPHERE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION

Abram F. Myers, General Counsel of Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors, has prepared for the information of the members of that organization an analysis of the Government's application for a modification of the Consent Decree, which is so enlightening that HARRISON'S REPORTS wishes to bring it to the attention of its readers, for it believes, as does Mr. Myers, that it should be studied carefully by all independent exhibitors in order that they may form opinions based on the merits of the proposals and not on false and misleading statements put out by the producer propagandists concerning them.

Lack of space necessitates the reproduction of only the salient parts of the analysis, which has been printed in pamphlet form under date of August 15.

Mr. Myers points out that Assistant Attorney General Tom Clark had "sought with the utmost patience to negotiate a revised decree that would cure the defects of the original," but that he had been "given the run-around by the distributors as only they can do it."

"The distributors," continues Mr. Myers, "assigned second string men to the task who had no power to bind their principals. They refused to yield any part of their monopolistic privileges. They submitted written proposals that would have protected their monopoly even more effectively than the 1940 decree. They framed their grudging proposals in language which could only be interpreted in a manner most favorable to themselves."

"By their shifty tactics the distributors successfully staved off a show down for more than eight months. But for some time it has been apparent that the Department's patience was wearing thin."

"The show down came with stunning suddenness. The Department, on August 7, filed an application for a modified decree, which included theatre divorcement. But the distributors quickly rallied and put their propaganda machine into operation. Exhibitors are being told by distributor representatives that under the Government's proposals they will have to buy pictures one at a time. And they are being asked whether they would rather have the affiliated theatres for competitors or such 'independents' as Schine, Crescent or Griffith."

Calling the Government's action "an unusual proceeding," Mr. Myers states that its legal effect is to afford the defendants "the option of litigating the provisions of the decree without a trial on the merits which, in all probability, would result in a finding that they have violated the law."

"It was to avoid the damaging effects of such a finding," asserts Mr. Myers, "that the defendants were so anxious to negotiate a decree in 1940. For once such a finding is made, it can be used against the defendants in private suits by exhibitors under the anti-trust laws."

"If the consenting defendants accept the opportunity thus given them, thereby limiting the proceeding to the issue of relief, the hearing can be streamlined and an early determination should be had. . . . If the defendants reject this procedure, as they have the right to do, they will face a trial of the pending case on the merits and possibly the filing of additional cases, thereby risking an eventual adjudication of guilt as well as such form of decree as the Court may see fit to enter. On the other hand, they may in this way postpone the day of reckoning for several years."

Citing recent decisions, Mr. Myers asserts that the "Supreme Court has gradually whittled down the rights of patent and copyright owners, and many of the privileges and immunities asserted by the distributors by virtue of their copyrights no longer exist. . . . In view of the trend of decision it sooner or later will be incumbent upon the Government to challenge forced percentage deals, involving the regulation of admissions, as price-fixing combinations."

Mr. Myers analysis treats the Government's proposals in the light of the recommendations of the Conference of Independent Exhibitors held in Chicago early this year.

Under the heading, "Block-Booking," Mr. Myers states: "The application does not suggest the re-instatement of Section IV (a), limiting blocks to five trade shown pictures, which also lapsed in 1942. Instead, the Government proposes the following:

"No distributor defendant shall condition the licensing of one feature or group of features upon the licensing of another feature or group of features."

"This very language was proposed by the Independent Conference, not as a sole method of distribution, but as a cure for the forcing of features. The selling method proposed by the Independents was that pictures be offered in not less than quarterly groups."

"But since the Government now puts it forward as a solution of the block-booking problem, it should be carefully considered on its merits. As soon as the distributors recovered from their shock they put their propaganda machine into operation. Joseph Hazen, chief negotiator of the defendants, made the following statement:

"It means that exhibitors will have to buy pictures singly if the modified decree should become effective. (*Film Daily*, Aug. 8.)"

"Evidently taking their cue from Mr. Hazen, branch managers and film salesmen are trying to frighten the exhibitors into opposing the proposal by the old one-at-a-time threat which was badly overworked during the Neely Bill campaigns. There is nothing whatever in the language proposed by the Government that would require the distributors to sell pictures singly and the Department of Justice will hardly appreciate Mr. Hazen's efforts to distort its meaning."

"The provision places no limitation on the number of trade shown pictures that the distributor and the exhibitor may agree upon as part of a single deal. It merely says that if an exhibitor wishes to license a particular picture or group of pictures, the distributor cannot force him to take another picture or group. It merely eliminates the element of coercion in selling without specifying how many pictures or how few can be sold at one time."

"Of course, if Mr. Hazen and the Charlie McCarthys in the field mean that in retaliation for having to sell under such an open system they will willfully adopt a policy of selling one picture at a time, they are assuming a grave responsibility. The illegal and contemptuous nature of such a course of action could not be ignored by the Department of Justice or by the Court."

Under the heading, "Forcing Shorts," Mr. Myers points out that the Government's proposal "not only would prescribe a selling method which affords a free right of selection, but it also would cover the practice of forcing features."

"The most commendable change in the anti-forcing provisions," continues Mr. Myers, "is that under the Government's proposals they would no longer be enforceable by the exhibitors through arbitration. The Allied questionnaires proved conclusively that forcing had been widely practiced under the consent decree. But the burden of enforcement was east upon the exhibitors and they dared not risk incurring the ill will of the distributors by filing arbitration proceedings. Moreover, the procedure was too slow and expensive and the relief, if any, came too late."

"Under the Government's proposal forcing will constitute a violation of the decree; the perpetrators will be in contempt of court and subject to punishment for their acts. This places the burden of enforcement on the Department and the Court, where it properly belongs. It overcomes the most serious criticism of the decree made by the Temporary National Economic Committee."

"The Independent Conference, in its report to the Department of Justice, said that 'unless these offenses are made subject to injunctions written into the decree, and the Department undertakes to police and enforce the decree, violation and evasion will surely result.'"

(Continued on inside page)

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IT'S GOLDWYN AGAIN!

Samuel Goldwyn is battling with exhibitors again!

Unable to agree with the exhibitors of Reno, Nevada, upon terms for the licensing of his production, "Up in Arms," he converted a Reno dance hall into a theatre, and became temporarily an exhibitor for the showing of his picture. At the same time he issued a statement that "Reno is typical of the squeeze by which many theatre units, large and small, deprive independent producers of their rightful share of boxoffice dollars," and he threatened to carry his fight against what he terms "monopolistic practices in exhibition" directly to the public.

According to Goldwyn, he was compelled to take this action because of his inability to arrange an equitable deal with the T & D Jr. Enterprises, the theatre circuit that operates the five theatres in Reno. Executives of this circuit, replying to Goldwyn's charges, have issued statements to the effect that they offered to exhibit the picture on a "live-and-let-live" basis, but Goldwyn's excessive percentage demands, as well as the requirements that they buy the picture for all their theatres, which they operate in scores of towns and cities in Northern California, including San Francisco, prohibited their concluding a satisfactory deal with him.

The controversy, as most of you undoubtedly know, was given wide publicity in the nation's newspapers through the Associated Press. Moreover, Goldwyn enlisted the aid of the Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, which, with Mary Pickford as spokesman, during a broadcast in connection with the local premiere of the picture, defended his stand against what they termed exhibition's "monopolistic practices."

HARRISON'S REPORTS is not in a position to pass judgment on the controversy between Goldwyn and the T & D Circuit insofar as it relates to the rental terms for the picture, because it has no knowledge of what the different proposals were. It is cognizant of the fact, however, that Goldwyn, in selling his pictures, has acquired a reputation for demanding excessive rentals, preferred playing time, and other conditions equally unfair. And, as evidence of Goldwyn's unreasonable demands, we need go no further than his own statement to the Associated Press that his refusal to sell "Up in Arms" except on his own terms has "kept the picture out of 4000 cities which otherwise would see it." This statement is commented upon in a recent bulletin issued by Allied States Association, which stated: "We can only remark that, with the current film shortage, Sam's terms for 'Up in Arms' must be pretty steep. Four thousand theatres can't be wrong." No, nor can more than 4000 theatres be wrong; 4000 cities represent, in all probability, a much larger number than 4000 theatres.

What HARRISON'S REPORTS objects to is Goldwyn's attempt to win for himself an unmerited sympathy, by posing himself as an "independent producer" who is being deprived of his "rightful share of box-office dollars" by the "monopolistic practices in exhibition."

Goldwyn's status in this industry is far from that of an "independent producer" in the accepted meaning of that term. It would be more accurate to describe him as a "super-major producer," for he not only has a major company distribute his pictures, at an astoundingly low cost for its services, but he also reserves the right to fix the terms at which his pictures shall be sold, and to pass upon each deal before the contract becomes binding. Sitting in such a position, it is unbecoming for Goldwyn to whine for sympathy while he remains mute on the question of whether or not he has been fair and reasonable in his dealings with the Reno exhibitors.

But Goldwyn did not remain mute on the subject of exhibitors in general. In a statement to the press in Reno, he said:

"Because of the monopolies existing throughout the country, the boys, when they return from the war, will practically be prohibited from entering into exhibition of motion pictures. They cannot build or occupy theatres in opposition to circuits or pooled situations without the consent of existing owners or operators, as no product of consequence would be available to them. Tentatively, Congress passed the so-called G. I. Bill of Rights, but no mention was made of the right to a free and open market to them for the exhibition of motion pictures."

I cannot figure out just why the problem of how returning soldiers will get into exhibition was ever brought into the issue, unless, of course, Sam Goldwyn is trying to tell us that his fight against "monopolistic practices" is entirely patriotic, and not for his own selfish interests. That, of course, would be pure bunk; Goldwyn's primary interest has been and always will be Goldwyn, and his attempt to prey on the public's sympathy by a display of frenzied, though feigned, patriotism is as reprehensible as was his unpatriotic act in 1942, when he placed his own selfish interests above the interests of his country by reissuing "The Real Glory," which depicts the Philippine Moros, our allies, in the worst possible light. The reissuing of that picture was an obvious attempt to "cash in" on the patriotic fervor of the American people, in whose minds the gallant defense of the Philippines was then still vivid. The fact that the story slandered a brave ally was of little concern to Goldwyn. It was only after the protestations of the late Manuel Quezon, President of the Philippines, and of our own Government, that he finally recalled the film. Now, however, when his pocketbook seems threatened, Goldwyn waves the American flag and sings about the G. I. Bill of Rights. It just doesn't make sense.

Any intelligent observer realizes that Goldwyn's Reno activities have a two-fold purpose—first, to gain for himself some nationwide publicity at a relatively low cost, and, secondly, to frighten exhibitors into submitting to his unfair demands lest he exhibit his pictures in their localities as he is doing in Reno.

According to a report in the *New York Times*, it cost Goldwyn about \$30,000 to put on his Reno show, most of the money being spent to alter the dance hall in accordance with safety regulations. The cost, therefore, would be sufficient to discourage Goldwyn should he decide to engage in a large scale fight against all exhibitors who would resist his demands. Consequently, exhibition has little to fear from Goldwyn the exhibitor.

Moreover, although Goldwyn seems to have become alarmed only presently about the lack of a "free and open market . . . for the exhibition of motion pictures," the independent exhibitors of this country have spent many years fighting for just such a free market—and they are still fighting for it, without ever having received either a mite of help, or a word of encouragement, from Sam Goldwyn. One of the things they fought for was to make the market free from tactics such as Goldwyn displayed in Reno. When a film salesman found himself unable to force inequitable terms upon an exhibitor, he frequently threatened to build a new theatre across the street. The tricks and ruses used by salesmen in connection with their threats to build opposition theatres, sometimes actually building them, are too numerous to recount here; besides, most of you are well familiar with them. Their purpose was to whip recalcitrant exhibitors into

(Continued on last page)

**"Dark Mountain" with Robert Lowery,
Ellen Drew and Regis Toomey**

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 56 min.)

Just a mild program melodrama, which doesn't mean much at the box-office, but serves well enough for the lower-half of a mid-week double-bill. The story is routine, offering few new angles; as a matter of fact, the spectator guesses the manner in which it unfolds. Undiscriminating audiences, however, should find it suitable, for parts of it are fairly exciting, particularly the closing scenes, where the ruthless husband of the heroine is outwitted by the hero in a hair-raising car crash:—

Elated at having received a promotion, Robert Lowery, a Forest Ranger, leaves the Dark Mountain region for a nearby city to propose to Ellen Drew, with whom he had been in love for years. He is dismayed to learn that she had married Regis Toomey, a prosperous wholesale merchant, whose pleasant personality had won her. One evening, Ellen discovers that Toomey was dealing in stolen goods. She decides to leave him, but, before she can carry out her plan, she unsuccessfully tries to stop Toomey from murdering a detective. Toomey compels her to flee with him, then tricks her into going to Lowery for aid. Lowery, hoping to clear her name, hides her in a mountain cabin. Toomey follows her there, and threatens to kill Lowery if she reveals his (Toomey's) presence. During his daily visits to Ellen, Lowery notices her nervousness. Bits of evidence convince him that Toomey was hiding in the cabin. Through a clever ruse, Lowery, with the aid of Eddie Quillan, his assistant, tricks Toomey into revealing himself. Toomey gains the upper hand and manages to escape in a dynamite-filled truck, with Ellen his captive. Lowery and Quillan give chase. When Ellen leaps from the truck, Lowery shoots one of the tires. The truck careens off the road, and the dynamite blows it, and Toomey, to bits.

Maxwell Shane wrote the screen play, Pine and Thomas produced it, and William Berke directed it. The cast includes Elisha Cook, Jr., Byron Foulger and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Storm Over Lisbon" with
Erich Von Stroheim, Richard Arlen
and Vera Hruba Ralston**

(Republic, October 16; time, 86 min.)

Better than average production values have gone into the making of this espionage melodrama, but it seems a pity that so much care was given to everything but the story, which is so involved and confused that instead of intriguing the spectator it tires him out. Numerous mysterious happenings are simply left unexplained. Moreover, it moves slowly and lacks suspense. The performances are only passable, but the players are blameless because of the faulty material. At best, it should get by as a supporting feature:—

Suspecting Erich Von Stroheim, owner of a mysterious gambling club, of collaborating with Axis agents, the Lisbon secret police assign Vera Rhuba Ralston, an international dancer, to follow his movements. Vera, posing as a refugee, places herself under Von Stroheim's protection, and learns that he had been asked by an Axis power to intercept Richard Arlen, a U. S. correspondent, who was hiding out in Lisbon after escaping from a prison camp with a vital war secret on film. At Von Stroheim's suggestion, Vera, through Robert Livingston, an American flyer and friend of Arlen's, finds Arlen in a cellar hideout. Both become attracted to each other. Von Stroheim orders her to drug Arlen and obtain the secret film from him. Vera tries to warn Arlen, but Von Stroheim's henchmen appear on the scene. Both are imprisoned in the gambling club, with Arlen believing Vera to be one of Von Stroheim's aides. Arlen eventually becomes convinced of Vera's sincerity and, in a sensational break, escapes with her from the club. They go to the secret cellar to obtain the film, which Arlen had hidden in the hollow of a candle. Arriving there, they find Von Stroheim waiting for them. Von Stroheim finds the film, but before he can destroy it, secret police rush in and seize him. Arlen leave for America with the film, promising to return to Vera.

Doris Gilbert wrote the screen play, and George Sherman produced and directed it. The cast includes Otto Kruger, Eduardo Ciannelli, Mona Barrie and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"The Doughgirls" with Ann Sheridan,
Jane Wyman and Alexis Smith**

(Warner Bros., release date not set; time, 102 min.)

Based on the successful Broadway stage play of the same title, this is a racy romantic comedy-farce, the kind that should go over fairly well with most audiences, in spite of the fact that the comedy is often forced. The story, which is set against a war-time Washington background, revolves around three young ladies who get themselves into all sorts of complications when, for one reason or another, the marital status of each one is proved illegal. Its romantic mixups, and its satirical treatment of Washington's housing shortage, are so amusing that one is kept laughing throughout, without stopping to consider whether the story makes sense or not. A most amusing character is the Russian woman guerilla fighter portrayed by Eve Arden; her performance is by far the best of the cast.

The story unfolds in Washington, where Jane Wyman, newly married to Jack Carson, is imposed upon by Ann Sheridan and Alexis Smith to share her honeymoon suite with them. Ann was married to John Ridgely, and Alexis was waiting to marry Lieut. Craig Stevens, who had officially gone on record as being married, but came down with the measles before the ceremony could be performed. Complications arise when Jane discovers that the Justice of the Peace who performed her marriage ceremony was an imposter, and Ann learns that she had married Ridgely before his divorce from Irene Manning became final. From then on matters become complicated: Carson refuses to legalize his marriage to Jane until she gets rid of her unwanted tenants; Ridgely brings Eve Arden, a Russian guerilla fighter to the apartment, and she decides to live there instead of at the Russian Embassy; Charles Ruggles, Carson's elderly employer, tries to win Jane's love; a government official, whom Ridgely sought to interest in a soy bean process, falls in love with Irene; Jane is compelled to pawn her jewels in order to pay the hotel bill; Alan Mowbray, a radio commentator, gains possession of the apartment, but permits all to remain; and Alexis, set to marry Stevens, finds that she lost the license. The mad whirl of events is finally brought to an end when Eve produces a Russian priest who obligingly performs a mass marriage ceremony to the satisfaction of all concerned.

James V. Kern and Sam Hellman wrote the screen play from the play by Joseph A. Fields. Mark Hellinger produced it, and Mr. Kern directed it.

There are no objectionable situations.

**"National Barn Dance" with
Robert Benchley, Charles Quigley
and Jean Heather**

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 76 min.)

An undistinguished but pleasant comedy, with hillbilly music, best suited for theatres where this type of entertainment is enjoyed. The cast includes such popular radio entertainers as Lulu Belle and Scotty, Joe Kelly, the Dinning Sisters, the Hoosier Hot Shots, and Arkie, the Arkansas Woodchopper, who all appear on the well known radio show from which the picture takes its title; their popularity in certain sections of the country should be of considerable help. Not much can be said for the story, but it serves its purpose as a framework for the players' singing, dancing, and comedy antics:—

Learning that Robert Benchley, a radio advertising executive, was interested in securing rural entertainers for a lucrative canned soup account, Charles Quigley, a struggling young promoter, goes to Midvale, where a weekly barn dance was held every Saturday night. Representing himself as Benchley's assistant, Quigley signs the entertainers to a contract and brings them to Chicago. He finds himself in a predicament when Benchley declines to use their act; Charles Dingle, the canned soup sponsor, had told Benchley that a more high-brow type of entertainment was desired. Learning that Dingle and his wife (Mabel Paige) were to dine at Benchley's home that evening, and that Benchley was short of household help, Quigley smuggles the rural entertainers into the house and disguises them as servants. This gives the entertainers an opportunity to put on a show, which strikes the fancy of Dingle's wife, a down-to-earth type of person. She induces her husband to sign the entertainers to a contract, thus establishing the National Barn Dance radio show.

Lee Loeb and Hal Fimberg wrote the screen play, and Huth Bennett directed it.

"Reckless Age" with Gloria Jean

(Universal, November 17; time, 63 min.)

Despite the triteness of the story, this is a mildly pleasant program picture, with enough comedy and music to satisfy an average audience. The story is the old one about a poor little rich girl who rebels against the strict life imposed upon her by her wealthy guardian, leaving home to make her own way in the world. A few of the situations manage to provoke hearty laughter, but for the most part the comedy is ineffective. The interjection of the music is of no importance to the story, but it is pleasant. A highlight is a song and dance number by Harold Nicholas, a South American entertainer; it is the best part of the picture:—

Tired of being pampered, and of having her life managed for her, Gloria Jean, granddaughter of Henry Stephenson, wealthy chain store owner, runs away from home to make her own way in the world. She goes to a small New England town, where she assumes a fictitious name and secures employment as a salesgirl in one of her grandfather's stores. Her fine manners lead Chester Clute, the store manager, and Franklin Pangborn, his assistant, to suspect her of being a company investigator, and they quickly accept her different suggestions to advance the store's sales. Jean becomes friendly with Marshall Thompson, a stock clerk, and rents a room at his mother's boarding house. To help a soldier please his sweetheart, Jean sells him her own expensive bracelet for a nominal sum, and pockets the money. Marshall, noticing the transaction, believes she was stealing. He becomes suspicious of her past, which she continued to conceal. One of Jean's sales stunts causes a riot in the store and, as a result, Stephenson comes to the store to investigate the incident. Jean tries to avoid him by having herself committed to the local jail for stealing, but he learns of her presence in town and, after a round of explanations, peace is restored.

Gertrude Purcell and Henry Blankfort wrote the screen play, and Felix Feist produced and directed it. The cast includes Andrew Tombes, Jane Darwell, Lloyd Corrigan, Jack Gilford, Judy Clark, the Delta Rhythm Boys and others.

Suitable for all.

"Rainbow Island" with Dorothy Lamour and Eddie Bracken

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 97 min.)

Dorothy Lamour in a sarong, lavish sets, Technicolor photography, a few production numbers, and Eddie Bracken's clowning are what "Rainbow Island" has to offer; and if that is enough to satisfy audiences, then this picture should go over. But these things are tied together with one of the silliest stories imaginable, and the general effect is boredom. Slapstick is frequently resorted to for laughs and, in the closing scenes, everyone goes completely haywire in an attempt to be comical. The whole thing shapes up as just another excuse for Dorothy Lamour to appear in a sarong:—

Eddie Bracken, Gil Lamb, and Barry Sullivan, sailors marooned on a South Sea island, steal a Jap plane that had landed to investigate, and head for American waters. Their plane is forced down on an uncharted island, where they find themselves surrounded by a bevy of sarong-clad girls, among whom is Dorothy Lamour, daughter of an American doctor, who had been shipwrecked on the island years previously. The island's Queen (Ann Revere) orders the three men executed, but Dorothy, noticing a marked resemblance between Bracken and the island god, "Momo," convinces the Queen that "Momo" had returned to earth. Bracken is dressed in royal clothes and treated reverently. While he carries on the deception, his companions proceed to repair the plane. Suspicious of Bracken, two of the Queen's henchmen set out to prove that he is mortal. Bracken barely escapes detection, but matters reach an impasse when the boys, ready to fly away, learn that the Queen had made a necklace out of the plane's spark plugs. Bracken gives the Queen a sleeping powder in an attempt to retrieve the plugs. He is caught by the natives who, believing the Queen dead, order his and his friends' execution. Dorothy, however, manages to set them free. A wild chase ensues, but the boys manage to reach the plane and fly off, taking Dorothy and her father with them.

Walter DeLeon and Arthur Phillips wrote the screen play, E. D. Leshin produced it, and Ralph Murphy directed it. The cast includes Marc Lawrence, Reed Hadley and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Our Hearts Were Young and Gay" with Gail Russell and Diana Lynn

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 81 min.)

Mild program fare. As a book, "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay," which is a real-life account of the comedy adventures of Cornelia Otis Skinner and Emily Kimbrough, when they toured Europe in 1923 as two unchaperoned adolescents, was a best seller and made amusing reading, but as screen material it misses fire. The story is too episodic and slow-moving, and the predicaments the girls get themselves into when they try to be "worldly" are, at best, only mildly humorous. Gail Russell, as Miss Skinner, and Diana Lynn, as Miss Kimbrough, are charming, but at this stage of their screen careers they mean little at the box-office:—

En route to Europe, Cornelia falls in love with Avery Moore (James Brown), a football player, while Emily is attracted to Tom Newhall (Bill Edwards), a young doctor. Cornelia gets the measles two days before her arrival, but Tom and Emily manage to slip her by the health inspectors in Plymouth. The girls' tour of England and France get them into endless complications, highlighted by their being stranded all night on the locked tower of Notre Dame Cathedral. They drop their clothing to attract attention, but to no avail. The following morning they return to their hotel clad in blankets, accompanied by two suave Frenchmen, friends of Cornelia's father. Avery and Tom, who had been waiting for them all night, misunderstand the situation and start a fight with the Frenchmen. Cornelia's parents (Charles Ruggles and Dorothy Gish) arrive in the midst of the fracas. They decide that the girls have had enough "worldliness," and arrange for their passage home.

Sheridan Gibney wrote the screen play from the book by Miss Skinner and Miss Kimbrough. Mr. Gibney produced it, and Lewis Allen directed it.

"Arsenic and Old Lace" with Cary Grant, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre and Priscilla Lane

(Warner Bros., Sept. 23; time, 118 min.)

An hilarious entertainment; it should turn out to be one of the year's top box-office attractions. In its transition from stage to screen, the story, under the capable handling of Frank Capra, has lost none of its thrills or superior farcical humor. Some of the situations will cause audiences to roll with laughter, while others will make them jump with fright. Murder and insanity are not, as a rule, pleasant subjects, but the manner in which they have been treated is so amusing that one cannot help being highly amused.

The story, which has its setting in an old Brooklyn mansion, revolves around two lovable old maiden ladies, who poison homeless old men with elderberry wine because they could not bear to see them unhappy. A nephew, a drama critic, visiting them on his wedding day, discovers one of the victims and believes that the murder had been committed by a second nephew, a harmless demented fellow, who lived with the old ladies and imagined himself to be Theodore Roosevelt. When the aunts coyly admit to him that they had murdered twelve men and had buried the bodies in the cellar, the startled nephew decides to pin the murders on "Teddy" to save the old ladies. While he rushes off to secure a commitment order, a third nephew, an escaped criminal maniac, arrives at the house with his partner in crime, an unbalanced plastic surgeon, bringing with them a dead body of their own. After a series of wild events, in which the maniacal nephew imposes upon the hospitality of his aunts' home, and almost murders the critic's wife lest she learn too much, the police subdue the fanatical household, arrest the maniac, and escort the two old ladies and "Teddy" to the insane asylum.

Josephine Hull and Jean Adair are perfect as the maiden aunts, and John Alexander is equally good as "Teddy Roosevelt." All three enacted their respective roles in the original stage play. Cary Grant, as the drama critic, gives his role a broad but effective interpretation. Priscilla Lane, as the bride; Raymond Massey, as the maniac; Peter Lorre, as the plastic surgeon; Jack Carson, as the policeman on the beat; Edward Everett Horton, as the asylum superintendent; and James Gleason, as a befuddled police inspector, are very effective.

Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein wrote the screen play from the play by Joseph Kesselring. Frank Capra produced and directed it.

line: to make them accede to any terms demanded. Throughout the years, exhibitors have learned to steel themselves against these tactics and to have no more fear of them. And the mere fact that this time the salesman is Sam Goldwyn will make no difference. The exhibitors will not be brow-beaten.

Nevertheless, since Goldwyn has elected to publicize his fight, the exhibitors, through their local newspapers, should see to it that the public is well informed of their side of the argument. Tell the public that yours is but one of thousands of theatres that refuse to bow to his unfair demands, and point out that the absence of his pictures from so many theatre screens is in itself indicative of the fact that his selling terms are unreasonable.

Despite Goldwyn's protestations, the present controversy is fundamentally nothing more than the every-day bargaining between buyer and seller. It should not have gone to the public, either through the press, or through the radio. Neither should Goldwyn have gone into the dance hall-theatre business. And he certainly should not have resorted to waving the flag and appealing for sympathy. The entire matter should be quieted down and withdrawn from public attention. But if Goldwyn should refuse to do this, then the exhibitors will be free to give to the public, through their screens, the press and the radio, all the facts concerning his tactics. It will ruin his role of public benefactor.

"Lost in a Harem" with Abbott and Costello

(MGM, December; time, 89 min.)

As compared with the last few Abbott and Costello slapstick comedies, "Lost in a Harem" is a good deal more laugh-provoking; it should easily satisfy their followers, while others will find it difficult to restrain themselves from laughing at their completely nonsensical antics, which revolve around their misadventures in a Bagdad-like palace, under the hypnotic spell of a tyrannical ruler. The story, of course, is meager, but it serves its purpose as a framework for their gags and comedy routines. The funniest parts of the picture are where Murray Leonard, as a demented derelict, gets into a murderous mood each time he finishes telling the story of how he had murdered a man; it is an ancient routine, but very effective. A few production numbers, built around Jimmy Dorsey's orchestra, give the picture some tuneful musical relief. It is obvious that some of the settings were originally used in "Kismet," but this adds considerably to the fairly good production values:—

Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, comedians in a bankrupt musical revue touring the Orient, and Marilyn Maxwell, the show's singer, land in jail when they start a riot in a cafe. John Conte, a desert sheik, smitten with Marilyn, arranges an escape for the trio when they agree to help him regain control of his small kingdom, which had been wrested from him by his evil uncle (Douglas Dumbrille), who used two mysterious rings to hypnotize those who opposed him. Explaining that his uncle was susceptible to blondes, Conte arranges with Marilyn to fascinate Dumbrille while Abbott and Costello steal his rings. The trio gain entrance to the palace, but Dumbrille hypnotizes them and learns of his nephew's plot. He jails the boys and plans to marry Marilyn. Conte manages to free the boys, and smuggles them into Dumbrille's harem. Posing as Hollywood talent scouts, the boys win the cooperation of Dumbrille's chief wife and, with her aid, steal the rings. After a series of incidents, in which the boys and Dumbrille alternately gain the upper hand, the kingdom is restored to Conte, who makes Marilyn his Queen.

Harry Ruskin, John Grant, and Harry Crane wrote the screen play, George Haight produced it, and Charles Reisner directed it.

Suitable for all.

"Pearl of Death" with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce

(Universal, September 22; time, 69 min.)

A fairly good murder mystery melodrama, one of the best in the "Sherlock Holmes" series. This time "Holmes" sleuthing revolves around the theft of a priceless pearl by a master criminal, and around the subsequent murders that are committed by the criminal's tool, an inhuman monster, in an effort to outwit the detective and to retain possession of the gem. There is no mystery as to the identities of the criminals, the audience having been made aware of this almost from the beginning. But this fact does not detract from

the interest, since one does not know how "Holmes" will solve the crimes. Unlike most of the previous pictures in the series, the plot is worked out in a logical manner and is certain to please followers of this type of entertainment:—

Disguised as an innocent old clergyman, Basil Rathbone foils an attempt by Evelyn Ankers and Miles Mander to steal a valuable pearl that was being delivered to a British museum. Rathbone delivers the pearl personally. Protesting to the museum's director that the burglar alarm system was inadequate, Rathbone disconnects the wires to prove his point. Mander, posing as a porter, steals the pearl during the demonstration. Though ridiculed by the press, Rathbone, aided by Nigel Bruce, his close friend, continues his search for the pearl. A series of grisly murders, in which the victims' backs had been broken, is recognized by Rathbone as the work of Rondo Hatton, a half-witted giant, with whom Mander had been associated in the past. Noticing that the body of each victim was surrounded by broken china, Rathbone traces this clue to a pottery shop, where he discovers Evelyn working as a salesgirl. He intercepts her telephone call to Mander and learns that the pearl had been hidden in one of six wet plaster busts of Napoleon. Tracing the buyers of the busts, Rathbone learns that five of them were the murder victims, whom Mander and the giant had killed in an attempt to recover the gem. Learning the identity of the sixth buyer, Rathbone hastens to his home in time to outwit Mander and his tool. He kills them both, saving the pearl and returning it to the museum.

Bertram Millhauser wrote the screen play, based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Six Napoleons." Roy William Neill produced and directed it. The cast includes Dennis Hoey and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Till We Meet Again" with Ray Milland and Barbara Britton

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 88 min)

A slow-moving anti-Nazi melodrama. No one can deny that the picture has been produced with care, and also the fact that at times it is emotionally stirring, but pictures based on the underground resistance theme have been done so many times within the last two years that it is doubtful if regular picture-goers will be able to work up more than a mild interest in the proceedings, particularly since this one differs little either in story or in treatment. Too much talk slows down the action considerably, some of the situations being dragged out to a point where they become tiresome. There is much human interest in the story, and the restrained romance between Barbara Britton, as the novice from a convent, and Ray Milland, as the married American flyer, whom she helps to escape from France, has been handled with good taste. The action has some moments of suspense, and a few highly melodramatic incidents, but on the whole the story lacks conviction:—

Shot down over occupied France, Ray Milland is given refuge in a convent, which was used as a hiding place by the Mother Superior (Lucille Watson) and Vladimir Sokoloff, the gardener, members of the underground. Milland's presence in the convent is unwittingly betrayed by Barbara Britton, a novice, when Konstantin Shayne, Nazi commandant of the village, questions her. A searching party is sent to the convent, and an over-zealous Nazi soldier, when refused admittance, kills the Mother Superior. Blaming herself for the tragedy, and feeling impelled to help Milland escape, Barbara doffs her habit and offers to help him. Sokoloff arranges for Milland to travel as a French war veteran, stricken dumb, and for Barbara to pose as his wife. Both fall in love as they make their way to the coast, but restrain their feelings because Milland is married. Meanwhile the Nazi commandant, guessing that Barbara was helping Milland, sends Walter Slezak, the town's collaborationist mayor, in pursuit of them. They evade Slezak for a time, but he and the commandant eventually catch up with them in a seaport town. Sacrificing her own safety, Barbara tricks the commandant into allowing Milland to escape. Furious, the commandant decides to send her to the brothels of Poland. Slezak, aroused, attempts to shoot the commandant, but the bullet accidentally kills Barbara instead.

Lenore Coffee wrote the screen play, David Lewis produced it, and Frank Borzage directed it.

Suitable for all.

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Wanton Waste in Production

"Of the approximately three hundred million dollars that are spent in production yearly," the head of a major studio told me recently "not more than two hundred million reach the screen. The remainder is either wasted in excessively long pictures, or thrown on the cutting room floor. If that hundred million dollars were put into the pictures, the box-office receipts would increase a lot."

I have been familiar with the arguments against the extra long pictures and will discuss them in this article, but I was more interested in the, what this executive called, "wanton waste" in the production of the lesser pictures, and asked him for details. And this is what he said:

"Most scripts are overwritten. On a ninety-minute picture, the script should be no more than one hundred and thirty pages since it takes anywhere from one-half minute to three-quarters of a minute to unfold the action of a single page. But what happens? Invariably the script is prepared in one hundred and eighty pages. The entire script is shot, and the picture is brought to the required length in the cutting room."

"I shall not discuss," he said, "the disadvantages when the cutter has to eliminate almost one-quarter of the running time in order to bring a picture down to its required length; just now I shall confine myself to the waste consequent to the loose preparation of the screen play. To shoot the extra scenes, the cost is proportionate. If, for instance, a producer budgets his picture at, say, \$800,000 in the case of a ninety minute picture, the extra scenes shot will cost no less than one-quarter of the budget figure." "In other words," he said, "two hundred thousand dollars are thrown by the film editor on the cutting room floor just because the screen play was not prepared with patience and judgment so as to eliminate the unnecessary shooting."

"What would you think," he asked me, "if an architect should hand to the contractor an imperfect blue print of a building and asked him to go ahead with construction, promising to make either additions or alterations as construction proceeds? It is no different in the case of motion pictures."

I asked him why the extra pages should cost so much money.

"Leaving aside," he said, "the salaries of the leading players and of the cast, of the technical crew, and of the studio rent and of the wear and tear of whatever

mechanical devices are used, there is the material involved, including raw stock. Every 'take' that is shot means that much more negative stock used, more positive stock and more printing. All this runs up to money.

"But this is not all: the average director has no conception of the stock he wastes, not to say of the costly time he consumes. As a result, he keeps on shooting 'takes' of the same scenes so as to shoot a perfect scene. I have seen directors shoot as many as sixty 'takes' of the same scene—a cruel waste.

"I say 'cruel waste' advisedly and I am going to prove it to you: In one of our pictures, a director who has a great reputation shot twenty-three 'takes' of the same scene and ordered that a positive be printed of every 'take.' Without his knowledge, we selected only five 'takes' and out of these we had printed twenty-three positives. The director ran them all but he did not know the difference; he thought that they were prints from twenty-three different 'takes.'

"No doubt, other studios have had the same experience.

"Cutting down a picture to ninety minutes when it is shot in one hundred and twenty is not an easy matter; the cutters must work anywhere from twice to ten times as long; and if the picture is scheduled for an early release, they often have to do a patched up job. If the same thought were given to the script before shooting is begun as is given by the cutters in bringing the picture down to the required length, not only the quality would be better, but also a fortune could be saved."

I said to this executive: "For years I have held the theory that the picture should be produced in the script, and that the shooting should be merely routine work, for after all the director is merely the interpreter of the action that is in the script. The skill of the director should be used in the faithful interpretation of the scenes in the script by getting the best there is in the actors and not in making changes on the set."

"You are right," he said to me. "Allowance of anywhere from five to ten percent for the shooting of extra scenes may be made in what we call 'protection shots,' but the picture should be finished in the script, by the writer in collaboration with the producer. The trouble is that the producer can hardly call to task a director who has reputation—he is afraid lest the

(Continued on last page)

**"When Strangers Marry" with
Kim Hunter, Dean Jagger
and Robert Mitchum**

(Monogram, Oct. 7; time, 67 min.)

A very good psychological program murder-mystery melodrama, expertly directed and well performed by a capable cast. It is by far better than the majority of similar type melodramas produced by the larger companies. In spite of the fact that the story has a number of implausible coincidents, it is tensely exciting, filled with intrigue and suspense, and grips one's attention from the very beginning right to the end. The fact that the murderer's identity is concealed until the finish adds to the intrigue. Though each of the players perform very well, Kim Hunter, as the harassed bride of an innocent murder suspect, is outstanding; she has an appealing personality, and wins the spectator's sympathy:—

In answer to a telegram sent to her from Philadelphia by Dean Jagger, her husband of two months, Kim Hunter travels to a New York hotel to meet him. There she finds a room reserved for her, but Jagger fails to appear. After two days, Kim, fraught with worry, appeals to Robert Mitchum, a former suitor living at the hotel, asking him to help her. Mitchum takes her to the missing persons bureau at police headquarters, where detective Neil Hamilton, noting that Jagger's telegram had been sent from Philadelphia, suspects him to be the person who, two days previously, strangled a man with a silk stocking in a Philadelphia hotel, stealing \$10,000 from him. Shortly thereafter, Jagger telephones Kim and asks her to meet him at a cheap rooming house. Kim becomes confused by his mysterious movements and his desire to remain secluded. Through Mitchum, she learns that he was suspected of the Philadelphia crime. Though convinced of his guilt, Kim helps Jagger elude the police and goes into hiding with him. Before the police find and arrest him, Jagger admits to Kim that he had shared a room with the murdered man, but insists that he did not commit the crime; circumstantial evidence was against him, and for that reason he had gone into hiding. Subsequent events lead Kim to become suspicious of Mitchum when she learns that he had bought her a gift—silk stockings—but did not give it to her when he learned that she had married Jagger. She gives this information to Hamilton, who questions Mitchum and tricks him into revealing himself as the murderer. Her faith in Jagger justified, Kim leaves with him on a long-postponed honeymoon.

Philip Yordan and Dennis J. Cooper wrote the screen play, Maurice and Franklin King produced it, and William Castle directed it. The cast includes Lou Lubin, Dick Elliot and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Enemy of Women" with Claudia Drake,
Paul Andor and Donald Woods**

(Monogram, Oct. 21; time, 87 min.)

Biographical of the career of Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's chief propagandist, this anti-Nazi drama is only mildly interesting, in spite of the fact that it has been produced on an expensive scale. The chief fault with the story is that it is too episodic, with too much of what transpires being left to the imagination of the spectator. This is undoubtedly due to the poor editing in cutting the picture's original running time of

137 minutes down to 87 minutes. The story traces Goebbels' rise to power and, through his frustrated love for a German actress, illustrates his viciousness and his ruthless methods in dealing with those who oppose him. There is nothing unusual about the story, since much of what is shown has been done many times in countless other anti-Nazi pictures. It may, however, turn out to be a fair success, because its subject matter lends itself to exploitation. The performances of the cast are fair, but none of the players means anything at the box-office:—

Goebbels (Paul Andor), an unsuccessful playwright, becomes infatuated with a young actress, Maria (Claudia Drake), daughter of Colonel Brandt (H. B. Warner), in whose home he had lodgings. The Colonel drives Goebbels from the house when he attempts to make love to Maria. With the advent of the new German Socialist Party, Goebbels becomes one of Hitler's ardent followers, eventually being appointed propaganda minister when the Nazis come into power. He again meets Maria, who was working as a bit player in a Hanover theatre, and uses his political power to make her a motion picture star. Maria, however, turns aside his attentions in favor of Dr. Hans Traeger (Donald Woods), a young physician. Not until Goebbels, who had long remembered the insult he had suffered at her father's hands, has the Colonel executed during a Nazi purge, does Maria realize that her success and her father's death were the result of Goebbels' machinations. She flees to Austria, where she marries Dr. Traeger. Their happiness is complete until Maria, in an effort to help a friend held by the Gestapo, returns to Germany; Goebbels refuses her permission to return to Austria. Dr. Traeger follows her, only to be arrested by Goebbels on a trumped up charge. Goebbels then offers Maria safe passage to Switzerland for her husband, provided she consents to become his mistress. She accepts. After escorting Traeger to the border, Maria escapes from her bargain when she meets death during an Allied air raid over Berlin.

Albert Zeisler and Herbert O. Philips wrote the screen play, and W. R. Frank produced it. Mr. Zeisler directed it. Other cast members who appear briefly include Sigrid Gurie, Ralph Morgan, Beryl Wallace, Gloria Stuart, Byron Foulger, Robert Barratt and others.

There are no objectionable situations.

**"Twilight on the Prairie" with
Johnny Downs, Leon Errol
and Vivian Austin**

(Universal, July 14; time, 62 min.)

This program musical, with a western locale, is no better and no worse than the majority of similar low-budgeted comedies with music specialized in by Universal. The story, which is really two-reeler material stretched to feature length, is feeble, but it serves to tie in the numerous musical specialty numbers, most of which are fairly pleasant. A few of the situations are laugh-provoking, but for the most part the comedy falls flat, despite Leon Errol's earnest efforts to be funny. Connie Haines, popular radio songstress, does most of the singing, and Jack Teagarden's orchestra furnishes the music:—

En route to Hollywood to make their first picture, Johnny Downs and his band of cowboy musicians find

themselves in a booming Texas town when their plane is requisitioned by the army. Their search for rooms proves futile. Learning that Leon Errol, foreman of the Bar-B ranch, owned by Vivian Austin, was in need of cowhands, the band, desperate for a place to sleep, put on their cowboy regalia and sign on as ranch hands, intending to quit on the following morning. Their identity becomes known, however, and the town's telegrapher announces to the news services that the band was doing its bit for the war effort by helping with the harvest. Downs' studio orders him to stay on the ranch and cash in on the publicity. The band pursues its duties on the ranch, causing no end of grief to Errol because of their inexperience. Meanwhile a romance springs up between Downs and Vivian. Ordered to report to the studio, Downs and the band leave for Hollywood. Vivian, peeved, accuses Downs of using the ranch and herself for publicity purposes. In Hollywood, Downs, over the protests of the director, convinces the studio head that the picture should be shot at the Bar-B ranch. All return to the ranch, where they complete the harvest and finish the picture. Vivian changes her mind about Downs.

Clyde Bruckman wrote the screen play, Warren Wilson produced it, and Jean Yarbrough directed it. The cast includes Eddie Quillan, Milburn Stone, and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"San Diego, I Love You" with
Louise Allbritton, Jon Hall
and Edward Everett Horton**
(*Universal, Sept. 29; time, 83 min.*)

Very good program entertainment, the sort that should please all types of audiences. The action revolves around an eccentric family composed of a widower, his four young sons, and a mature daughter, who leave their small-town home and go to war-crowded San Diego to promote one of his inventions. It is a completely nonsensical farce, but it is fast-moving and comical, has gay romantic entanglements, and the situations keep the spectator amused throughout. Though farcical, the story has a human quality, and despite the "whacky" antics of the characters, one finds them likeable and sympathetic. Every one in the cast is very good:—

At the insistence of his family, Edward Everett Horton, a small-town school teacher, agrees to resign his position and to take them to San Diego, where they hoped he could promote his invention, a collapsible life raft. Finding no seats on the train, Horton's daughter (Louise Allbritton) discovers an empty compartment, belonging to Jon Hall, a wealthy young industrialist, and innocently takes possession of it. Later, she invites Hall to share it with the family. Hall accepts, but the children make his trip miserable, causing him to have words with Louise. In San Diego, the family finds the hotels jammed, with no rooms available. Louise, desperate, uses her father's life savings as a down payment on an old mansion. Meanwhile Horton learns that the institute that had promised to back his life raft had stopped investing in inventions. Louise, determined not to let her father be turned down, goes to the institute and forces her way into the president's office, only to discover that he is Hall. The young industrialist attempts to elude her, but Louise doggedly pursues him. Reporters mis-

understand the situation and publish a story that Hall was having a romance with Louise. This infuriates Hall and leads him to believe that Louise was after his fortune. He eventually sees the humorous side of the situation and becomes friendly with her. They fall in love, and Hall agrees to test the life raft. The raft sinks with Hall in it, and the newspapers make of him a laughing stock. But it matters little, for an explosive powder invented by Horton in connection with the raft proves invaluable, assuring the family of great wealth.

Michael Fessier and Ernest Pagano wrote the screen play and produced it. Reginald Le Borg directed it. The cast includes Eric Blore, Buster Keaton, Irene Ryan, Rudy Wissler, Gerald Perreau, Charles Bates, Don Davis and others.

Suitable for all.

**"She's a Soldier, Too" with Beulah Bondi,
Nina Foch and Percy Kilbride**
(*Columbia, June 29; time, 67 min.*)

Tiresome. It consists of sixty-seven minutes of talk with absolutely no action. The story, which deals with the humanizing of a hard-bitten spinster, is unbelievable and over-sentimentalized, and one loses interest in the outcome, in spite of the fact that most of the characters awaken sympathy. Its chief asset is the performance of Percy Kilbride, who does the best work of the cast, but even his efforts are not enough to overcome the weak material. There is no reasonable connection between the title and the story. Set this one down for the lower-half of a mid-week double bill:—

Beulah Bondi and Ida Moore, spinster sisters, and their elderly brother, Percy Kilbride, live in seclusion in an old Philadelphia mansion. Their privacy is broken one night when Nina Foch, a woman taxi driver, rushes a young girl into the house to have her baby there instead of in her taxicab. Jess Barker, a doctor, delivers the child, but the young mother dies. The spinsters reluctantly agree to care for the baby, a boy, until his soldier-father (Lloyd Bridges) comes to claim him. Bridges, however, blames the child for his wife's death, and refuses to accept him. Nina undertakes to change his mind. Meanwhile Nina learns that the elderly trio were faced with the loss of their home due to a threatened foreclosure of a bank mortgage. She suggests that they rent rooms to defense workers so as to enable them to meet the mortgage interest and at the same time help relieve the housing shortage. Miss Bondi, the only reluctant one of the three, finally agrees to allow "outsiders" into the mansion. The family becomes financially stable when Kilbride, whose hobby was inventions, perfects a gadget for bombing planes and is given a \$15,000 payment against royalties. With that money, Miss Bondi pays the mortgage and, against the wishes of her brother and sister, evicts the defense workers from the mansion. Kilbride leaves in protest. When Nina, who had wed Bridges, comes to the mansion to claim the child, Miss Bondi suddenly feels the full impact of her loneliness and selfishness. She begs Nina's forgiveness and asks her to stay at the house with Bridges and the baby. At a Christmas party given to the defense workers by Miss Bondi, Kilbride rejoins the family.

Melvin Levy wrote the screen play Wallace MacDonald produced it, and William Castle directed it. Unobjectionable morally.

director quit his job. But, so far as my own company is concerned, we are determined to free ourselves of the director bondage. Just the other day a director of ours refused to cut down certain scenes in the script and to have the script tightened up. I kicked him out, even though he has considerable reputation, and got another director. If the other companies would do the same thing, the industry could save millions of dollars a year, not only from shooting unnecessary scenes, but also from discontinuing the practice of shooting a large number of 'takes' when they are not needed.

"After the war is over, I am sure that the director who will be able to shoot a scene with no more than three 'takes' will be in great demand; the others will have to spend their own money to produce pictures if they should insist upon their present wasteful tactics.

"The amount of money spent on a picture is no guarantee that the picture will bring the money at the box-office. It is intelligent preparation of the script and proper casting that really counts.

"If the money that is dissipated on each picture were put into the picture, it would bring in far greater profits and would give the public greater satisfaction. And this goes for the successful pictures, too. Undoubtedly, they would be more successful.

"Intelligent script preparation is far more essential now than it has ever been by reason of the fact that picture costs have gone high and are going still higher. The picture that you have just finished would cost you much more if you were to begin producing it now.

"Abnormal grosses make it possible for us to absorb the waste, but the lush times may not be with us long, and it behooves every studio to begin educating its directors and others responsible for the waste that, unless we eliminate it, the industry runs the danger of cracking under the load.

"As I have said, a reasonable number of protection shots are necessary to provide for an emergency, but the extra shots taken today are far beyond the bounds of reason.

"I have known cases where, in a two-hour picture, the first rough assembly was one hundred and fifty thousand feet when it should not have been even fifteen thousand. Imagine the cost of the negative alone not to say the salaries of the actors, of the technicians, of the wardrobe, of the studio rent, and of the one thousand and one other items! When the architect hands the contractor a plan for a house, the contractor studies the plan and orders the right amount of building material. Imagine what would happen if he were to order twice as much material! Picture-making should not be any different. The alibi of 'perfection' has been overworked. Under its guise, the directors are taking great license. Many of them still go under the theory that, unless they waste money for 'perfection,' they will not be considered good directors.

"I have known directors who directed outstanding pictures with no more than three 'takes' of each scene, and in many scenes only one 'take.' If the script is planned properly, and the director knows his business there is no need for more 'takes' unless, of course,

the actor fumbles his lines. The actors should study their lines before appearing before the camera; and they should be rehearsed on the set before shooting starts. The fact that the industry has been able to absorb the waste is no proof that it will be able to continue absorbing it. There may be bankruptcies unless we begin retrenching now.

"I don't mean to make cheaper pictures but only to eliminate the wanton waste, putting the money into the picture itself—into quality.

"Much of the waste is now caused by the fact that the tax brackets are high. Some people feel that the waste would have been paid to the Government in the form of taxes anyway, so why complain? To begin with, it is unpatriotic for us to waste money rather than pay it in taxes. We should be thankful that we, in the motion picture industry, are making a fine living instead of begrudging the taxes we have to pay and should remember that, if we had lost the war, the taxes we would have been paying would be many times the taxes we are paying now, not counting that we would have been reduced to slavery. And this goes for those stars who are refusing to make more than one picture a year on the theory that, if they should make more pictures, they would pay most of their additional earnings to the Government. But aside from the patriotic duty, it is the duty we owe to ourselves; we should learn to produce pictures with as little waste as possible so that, when the lush times go, we shall be in a position to continue producing good pictures, and not to have to start learning how to do it when we are in a pinch."

I called this studio executive's attention to the controversy that has arisen on the question of overlong pictures and asked him how he felt about it. He produced and showed me the following telegram from his company's New York office:

"Have talked with circuit buyers and leading exhibitors representing local and national circuits and they are very much concerned with the extreme length of many of the important releases. Consensus of opinion is that ninety minutes should be the maximum running time for top features. With necessity of maintaining double feature programs and getting turn-over in today's crowded theatres, over-length features are costing theatres of the nation a fortune. It may surprise some Hollywood producers to know that exhibitors are deliberately leaving out one, two and three reels of features. That operators are being instructed by theatre owners to cut whole sections out of over-length features. Audiences may be mystified by the action of some features but exhibitors, in order to get turn-over, are taking these measures to get in the dough. Therefore, it is only good sense to face the issue and have producers eliminate over-footage in excess of a running time of ninety minutes."

After reading the telegram, I was told by this executive that the exhibitor practice of taking one, two and even three reels from a long picture so as to make it fit his program has been going on for a long time, in spite of the fact that the contract forbids any elimination without the distributor's consent.

(To be continued)

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1944

No. 38

Wanton Waste in Production — No. 2

(Continued from last week)

So sensational were this executive's disclosures on waste in production that I called on the head of another major studio to get his point of view, particularly as it concerns the extra long pictures. I pointed out to him particularly exhibitor complaints to the effect that the industry seems to be reaching for the five-hour running time picture.

This second executive told me that he agrees with the views of the first studio executive about the waste, and with the exhibitors that the pictures are too long. But, as regards to the length of the features, he put the blame on the double-featuring exhibitors. "One Eastern exhibitor wrote me," he said, "that one of our pictures was at least thirty-five minutes too long. But the irony of it is that he double-featured this long feature with another feature so weak that his complaint really became a joke. He complained that our top feature is by thirty-five minutes too long, and yet he added a sixty-five minute running time to make the show still longer.

"Let me admit to you that we, at this studio as well as at other studios, are making our top pictures too long purposely, so as to discourage the exhibitors from double-featuring worth-while pictures.

"The exhibitors are accusing us of being wasteful. In my opinion, no one is more wasteful than the exhibitor. Just think of it! Some of them are double-featuring two top pictures."

This studio executive showed me a letter that he had received from one of the biggest circuits and his reply to the circuit head.

Part of his reply reads as follows:

"I have your letter of July 21st and have read the reviews you enclosed. I cannot help but agree with the opinion of the reviewers in the case of both pictures. It is also true that many pictures are being made over-length. The great problem that always arises in the mind of the producer, which is certainly not the factor that should finally determine the length of a picture, is the question of pictures being double-billed. As you know, the tendency of the exhibitor, without any consideration of the value of the particular product, is to double-bill top "A" pictures. The tendency of this seems to increase wherever pictures are made in length of under-footage rather than over-footage."

He then cites one of the company's top pictures, which should have no trouble playing as a single bill

because it is making a hit, being paired by one of the first-run theatres with a mediocre picture, the length of which was six thousand feet. "Here you have added 6000 feet of footage to the show and the producer has the perfect right to ask why," he said in his letter replying to the circuit head's complaint. "No doubt the answer of the exhibitor in this case would be that it is the policy of the house. But maybe the policy is wrong, so why not let's make this a two-way street? If the exhibitor and the producer could get together and iron out these kinks that certainly are costing the industry a tremendous sum of money, then it would be better all around. . . .

"Please understand that your letter just gave me an opportunity to let you know there are two sides to the question but it still does not lessen the importance of your very just criticism."

Although this executive is to a great extent right in his complaint against the practice of playing two top features on the same bill, and in general against the double-featuring policy of the majority of theatres, neither he nor the head of any other studio is justified in trying to "kill" this policy by making all top features over-length, for in doing so they are not taking into consideration the interests of the picture-going public. Adding unnecessary footage to a long picture slows up the action and bores the public during the showing of such footage. So one comes to the conclusion that the practice of some first-run theatre managers of cutting all unnecessary footage is a blessing rather than a vice. The only trouble is that the independent theatre owner cannot resort to this practice; only affiliated theatre managers can resort to it.

I called on one of the top executives of another major studio to get his viewpoint, and was told by him that the complaint against waste in production and against the practice of padding is all too true. He named a director who shot six hundred thousand feet of film in producing a feature. (*Editor's Note: The feature in question has not yet been released. Consequently, its final length cannot yet be determined.*)

I was astounded by this revelation. To cut a film, the running time of which may finally be two and one-half hours, down to the required length from even twenty thousand feet is, indeed, a problem—the cutters must be ingenious to effect smooth continuity; but to cut it down to such length from 600,000 feet is a task that no cutter can perform successfully.

(Continued on last page)

"The Singing Sheriff" with Bob Crosby and Fay McKenzie

(Universal, Oct. 6; time, 63 min.)

An ordinary comedy with music, the sort that may get by with undiscriminating audiences as the lower-half of a double bill. The story, which is a trite version of the mistaken identity theme, has about as much "meat" as a well-licked bone, and its treatment is most unimaginative. The comedy, at best, is only mildly amusing. Not much can be said for the music, which is undistinguished. Other than Bob Crosby, whose marquee value is questionable, the others in the cast mean nothing at the box-office:—

Shot while questioning Joe Sawyer about a murder, Samuel S. Hinds, sheriff of a tough western town, sends East for his son, whom he had not seen since boyhood. The son, down with measles, appeals to Bob Crosby, an actor and his employer, for help. Crosby, to make a dying man happy, offers to go West and pose as the son. Arriving at Hinds' home, Crosby finds that he has a beautiful "sister" (Fay McKenzie), with whom he falls in love. Edward Norris, the town lawyer, to whom Fay is engaged, becomes annoyed at Crosby's unusual "brotherly" affection for Fay. To clear up the murder, Hinds appoints Crosby as deputy sheriff and orders him to apprehend Sawyer's gang. Though thoroughly frightened, Crosby, through an accident, succeeds in chasing the outlaws out of town. Sawyer, however, plots to even matters. That night, while the townspeople celebrate at a barbecue, Sawyer sends some of his men to kill Crosby while others go to the town's bus depot to stage a robbery. Crosby, frightened by the shooting, decides to get out of town. He leaves a note for Fay, telling her who he really is, and heads for the bus depot. He arrives there in time to accidentally scare off the outlaws and prevent the robbery. He becomes a town hero to all except Fay, who resented the fact that he had deceived her in order to make love to her. Determined to square himself in her eyes, Crosby decides to remain in town and clear up the murder. He arrests Sawyer and tricks him into confessing, not only to the murder, but also to the fact that Norris was the real leader of the gang. His work accomplished, Crosby wins Fay.

Henry Blankfort and Eugene Conrad wrote the screen play, Bernard W. Burton produced it, and Leslie Goodwins directed it. The cast includes Fuzzy Knight, Iris Adrian and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"That's My Baby" with Richard Arlen and Ellen Drew

(Republic, Sept. 14; time, 68 min.)

Just a moderately entertaining program comedy, with some music. The story offers such a hodge-podge of nonsense that one becomes bored with the proceedings by the time the picture is half finished. As is usual in pictures of this type, numerous specialty acts are dragged in by the ear to bolster up the entertainment values, but this is of little help since none of these acts presents anything unusual. Not even such capable players as Richard Arlen and Ellen Drew are able to rise above the poor material:—

Because her father, Minor Watson, was in a constant state of depression, Ellen Drew summons two psychiatrists (Alex Callam and Leonid Kinskey) to

probe into the cause of his melancholia. The two psychiatrists learn that Watson had not laughed for twenty years, ever since he separated from his wife (Madeline Grey), an eccentric writer. To bring Watson out of his despondency, Kinskey arranges with Ellen and Richard Arlen, her fiance and artist employed by Watson's comic magazine publishing house, to replace the servants in Watson's home with performers to amuse him. All this serves to infuriate Watson even more. Ellen and Arlen decide to investigate Watson's past, hoping to find a clue to his troubles. They steal into his office and, raiding his private files, find evidence that indicated he was still in love with his wife. While going through the files, they are caught by Richard Bailey, Arlen's rival for Ellen's hand, who seizes upon this opportunity to have Watson discharge Arlen. Ellen, furious with her father, asks Arlen to elope with her at once, but Arlen suggests that they first attempt to cure her father. The young couple locate Ellen's mother and learn from her that Watson's one great ambition was to be a cartoonist. Years previously he had drawn a cartoon of a baby, but she had scoffed at it and both had not spoken to each other ever since that time. Arlen finds the cartoon Watson had drawn, and he sets about animating it in the hope that it will induce Watson to laugh. The experiment is a great success. With his wife beside him, and his creative idea developed on the screen, Watson becomes happy once again.

Nicholas Barrows and William Tunberg wrote the screen play, Walter Colmes and Dave Fleischer produced it, and William Berke directed it. The specialty acts include Mike Riley and his Musical Maniacs, Freddie Fisher and his Schnickelfritz Band, Isabelita and the Guadalajara Boys, Gene Rodgers, Peppy and Peanuts, Frank Mitchell and Lyle Latell, Alphonse Berge and Doris Duane, Adia Kuznetzoff, Al Marod, Chuy Reyes' orchestra and Pigmeat Markham.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Soul of a Monster" with Rose Hobart, George Macready and Jeanne Bates

(Columbia, August 17; time, 61 min.)

This is one of the poorest horror melodramas that has been turned out in a long while. The story is insipid, and the direction and acting are bad. Moreover, it is so lacking in suspense that instead of chilling or thrilling one, it is conducive to sleep. Most stories of horror melodramas are, as a rule, far-fetched, but this one is so completely absurd and dull that many patrons may not have the patience to see it through. The producer has tried to cover up the weak story material by resorting to the usual eerie camera tricks, but it is doubtful if any of these will scare even a five-year-old child:—

Informed that her husband (George Macready) was dying of an infection, and that there was no hope for his recovery, Jeanne Bates frantically prays to any power, good or evil, to save him. Her call is answered by Rose Hobart, a mysterious woman, who forces her way into the house and miraculously cures the dying man. Macready, who had been a kindly physician, falls under Miss Hobart's strange hypnotic powers, and he becomes vicious in his actions towards his wife, and towards Erik Rolf and Jim Bannon, his friends. While assisting Macready on an operation, Bannon,

who, too, was a doctor, accidentally gashes Macready with a scalpel. He is horrified when Macready not only fails to feel it, but no blood flows from the deep wound. Miss Hobart tries to get rid of Bannon by running him down with her automobile. Bannon, injured badly, appeals to Macready to operate on him. Miss Hobart enters the room just as Macready begins the operation and influences him to allow Bannon to die on the operating table. Charged with murder, Macready determines to destroy Miss Hobart and win his soul back from her. In a violent quarrel with Macready, Miss Hobart loses her balance and falls through a window to the pavement below. Macready awakens on his deathbed to find that he had been having a horrible dream. Persuading Jeanne not to appeal to the powers of evil for his recovery, a change comes over the dying man and his pulse quickens. Bannon, attending him, declares he will live.

Edward Dein wrote the screen play, Ted Richmond produced it, and Will Jason directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Dead Man's Eyes" with Lon Chaney, Jean Parker, Acquanetta and Paul Kelly

(Universal, Nov. 10; time, 64 min.)

A fair enough program-mystery melodrama, suitable for those who enjoy this type of entertainment. The treatment of the story follows a familiar pattern in that several of the characters are given motives for the commission of the crime. The story, however, is only mildly intriguing, for even though the identity of the murderer is not revealed until the closing scenes, one guesses early in the picture just who he is. Lon Chaney, as the blind artist, and Thomas Gomez, as the detective, are good, but the other members of the cast are unimpressive. The action is a bit too slow, and there is no comedy to relieve the tension:—

Lon Chaney, an artist in love with Jean Parker, becomes a victim of jealousy when Acquanetta, his model, sees to it that he daubs his tired eyes with acetic acid instead of boric acid, causing him to become blind. Chaney, not wishing to become a burden, tries to break his engagement to Jean. Informed that Chaney's sight could be restored by transplanting the cornea from a dead man's eyes, Edward Fielding, Jean's father, wills his eyes to Chaney. George Meeker, a rejected suitor, again courts Jean out of a belief that she will not marry Chaney. Her father, however, frowns on the courtship, angering Meeker. Meanwhile Paul Kelly, a mutual friend of all, reveals to Acquanetta that he was in love with her. Some weeks later, Chaney, having quarrelled with Fielding over Jean, goes to his home to apologize, only to find him beaten to death. Jean discovers Chaney leaning over her father, and accuses him of the murder. While Chaney is held for trial, the terms of Fielding's will are carried out. After the operation, Chaney pretends that he still cannot see, hoping to catch the murderer. Meanwhile Acquanetta accidentally discovers the murderer's identity and, realizing that her love for Chaney was hopeless, tries to telephone Jean to reveal his name. She is murdered before she can complete the call. Chaney, quietly carrying on his own investigation, comes to the conclusion that Kelly, in a desperate attempt to win Acquanetta for himself, had murdered Fielding so that he (Chaney) would be convicted of

the crime, thus causing Acquanetta to forget her love for him. Chaney arranges with the police to hide in his apartment, and invites Kelly to call on him. Bluntly accused of the murders, Kelly exposes himself by attempting to kill Chaney. The police stop him. Jean, begging Chaney's forgiveness, reunites with him.

Dwight V. Babcock wrote the screen play. Will Cowan produced it, and Reginald LeBorg directed it. The cast includes Thomas Gomez, Jonathan Hale, Pierre Watkin and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Last Ride" with Richard Travis and Eleanor Parker

(Warner Bros., Oct. 7; time, 57 min.)

A routine program gangster melodrama, with a formula "cops and robbers" plot. The method used by the hero, a detective, in apprehending the racketeers is the old one in which he allows himself to be discredited in order to gain the confidence of the gang. Even though it lacks novelty in treatment, and one guesses in advance the developments of the story, it may appeal to the action fans, for there are several fights and some exciting encounters between the police and the crooks. The story is somewhat unpleasant in that it pits brother against brother. There is some romantic interest, but it is of slight importance to the plot:—

Assigned to investigate the accidental death of Harry Lewis, who had been killed when a tire blew out on his car, Detective Richard Travis learns that the tire had been bought from a "black market" gang, which rebuilt old tires and sold them as new. Unknown to Travis, the gang was headed by Police Captain Cy Kendall, his immediate superior, whose chief henchmen were Jack LaRue and Charles Lang, Travis' brother. Travis, however, was aware of the fact that his brother was in a nefarious business, but did not know his connections. Acting on a tip that the gang was going to rob a tire warehouse, Travis catches five of the racketeers and offers to release them for a \$3,500 bribe. Kendall arranges for Travis' brother to deliver the money. A night watchman, who had witnessed the transaction, reports the incident to Police Headquarters. Wade Boteler, the Chief of Police, suspends Travis from the force, but does not let on that the suspension was a pre-arranged plan to allow Travis to gain the confidence of the gang so that he could learn the secret leader's identity. Through his brother, Travis becomes a member of the gang and he eventually meets Kendall. Meanwhile LaRue, who had been following Travis' movements, trails him to secret meeting with the Police Chief. Kendall, warned by LaRue, takes Travis to the gang's tire factory, intending to dispose of him. LaRue, pleased at having uncovered Travis' plan, boasts to Lang that Kendall will "take care" of his brother. Realizing that his brother's life was at stake, Lang kills LaRue and hurries to the factory. He arrives in time to prevent Travis' death, and shoots it out with Kendall. Lang dies and Kendall is badly wounded. The racket smashed, Travis is restored to the force with high honors.

Raymond L. Shrock wrote the screen play, and D. Ross Lederman directed it. The cast includes Mary Gordon, Michael Ames and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

Instead of interviewing more heads of major studios, I thought I would have a talk with the head of one of the independent studios. He said to me: "Those responsible for the waste of the directors are the heads of the companies more than the directors themselves. Having grown rich, they do not feel as though they should work hard any longer. Consequently, they allow the directors to run wild."

"Unless the director is to a certain extent supervised, he will use the company's money to aggrandize himself rather than promote the interests of the company by producing the picture at the lowest cost possible, and by getting the best values out of the story."

"Every director feels that the picture he is producing should win him the Academy Award. Consequently, he works for himself rather than for the company; he wants to dazzle the industry, not with the profits that the picture will bring, but with his direction. In other words, most directors work for themselves rather than for the company, but with the company's money."

"If the scripts are overwritten, causing the negative cost to run high; if all the values in the story are not brought out, the fault lies in the neglect of the studio executives, or even with their own laziness, rather than with any of the component factors. They should not pass the buck."

I wanted to hear the side of the directors, and approached one who has just finished a great picture at a considerable amount under budget.

"I agree with the others," he said, "that the director is in the main responsible for the waste. Instead of rehearsing with their actors beforehand, most directors go on the set in the morning unprepared. Then they try to rehearse the scenes, with the result that time is consumed until the players remember their lines. What you saw today was produced, not at the studio, but at the home of the leading main character. Many an evening I worked with him until late at night to give the young man a chance to perfect himself. When the scene called for the leading lady, she was sent for and she went through her part until she could act it and speak her lines with naturalness. When they stepped in front of the camera the following day, they knew what was wanted and went through the paces without a hitch."

"But that means work. But good results require work, for in my opinion no substitute has ever been found for work."

(To be concluded next week.)

A WAY TO AVOID ADVERSE PICTURE LEGISLATION ABROAD

Writes Bill Wilkerson in the August 18 issue of his *Hollywood Reporter*:

"From every way we view it, it is our opinion that the best thing the industry can do in its worrying about foreign legislation against its product, is to stand pat, do as little talking as possible and let the guys come to them instead of going to the guys. All the world wants Hollywood's entertainment and the

heads of all foreign governments realize that and know they have to deliver it or permit it to be delivered. . . ."

Evidently Wilkerson has in mind the Spanish Government, which is about to establish a prohibitive tariff on motion pictures, or rather on moving pictures that are produced in the United States. But the method that he suggests is not the best when it comes to producing results: In view of the fact that the heads of the Department of State believes that a free exchange of commodities among nations is the finest preventive of wars, the producers should appeal to Mr. Hull to induce the Spanish Government to avoid using a tariff against the entry of American motion pictures into Spain, and if he should fail in his efforts, then he should suggest to Congress to put a prohibitive tariff on some of the Spanish commodities that are imported by the United States. That is the best way of making the Spanish Government see the light.

COLUMNIST SIDNEY SKOLSKY'S UNJUSTIFIED CRITICISM

In a recent issue of the *Hollywood Citizen-News*, Sidney Skolsky said partly the following in his syndicated column about trailers:

"There is no business that hurts itself the way movies do. I'm referring now, especially, to trailers. You know what a trailer is: it is a film clip that is supposed to entice you and sell you on seeing the coming attraction at the theatre."

"But how many trailers ever got you back into the theatre to see that special picture? I can't recall any."

"Practically every studio has a trailer department whose business it is to make a film clip so interesting and enticing that it will be a 'teaser' and you will want to see the picture. But what happens? Often you say to yourself, after seeing a trailer: 'I don't have to see the picture. I feel as if I have seen it already.'"

"Many trailers tell so much that they tell the complete story in digest form. . . ."

Sidney Skolsky's remarks about trailers have no basis of fact. As far as any one knows, the trailer makers' motto has been and is: "Don't tell the story in a trailer." I know at least one trailer making company that sticks to this motto religiously—National Screen Service.

The procedure on trailers is no different from the procedure on either features or shorts; although the trailer producer is furnished with selected scenes of the picture, a script has to be prepared just as is the case with shorts as well as features. Thus the head of the trailer department has a chance to see whether a trailer tells the story or not; if it comes close to telling a story, either the scenes are rearranged, or some of them are eliminated, others being put in their places.

The trailer producer could not tell a story even if he wanted to. How can he tell the story in ninety feet of scenes, if it is a program feature, or in one hundred and fifty feet, if it is an "A" feature? It is impossible to tell a story even in cases where the trailer is extraordinarily long.

If Mr. Skolsky had looked into the trailer matter more fully, he would not have written that criticism.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1944

No. 39

Wanton Waste in Production — No. 3

(Concluded from last week's issue)

The technician who chooses the "takes" that will be put in the film is the film editor, commonly called "film cutter," unless, of course, the director gives definite orders, in which case the first "rough assembly" must be assembled as desired by the director. This is his prerogative in accordance with the rules of the Directors Guild. But once the director views the first assembly, then either the unit producer or the film editor takes charge. When either does so, he can overrule the director by taking out scenes which the director had approved, but which, in the opinion of the film editor, did not give the best results.

When the film editor is done with the editing, the picture is said to have been cut to the proper length, unless, of course, the picture belong to a minor classification and must be brought down to a standard length. In such a case, the film editor often is compelled to take out scenes that are, in his opinion, essential to the proper unfolding of the action.

Because of the nature of his work, the film editor knows more about the wastefulness of the directors than the member of any of the other crafts.

I sought the viewpoint of some film editors for presentation in this article.

"There is no excuse," one of them said to me, "for the so many 'takes' of each scene most directors 'shoot.' In one case I know, a director shot fifty 'takes' of one scene. When I was making the first assembly, I asked him which 'take' to use. 'Oh,' he said to me, 'any one of them will do! Use 'take One!'' The remainder of the 'takes' were thrown, speaking figuratively as well as almost actually, on the cutting room floor. (Editor's Note: The film editors have fine hooks on which they hang the superfluous film.)

"The trouble with many directors is that they lack the power of visualization and in order for them to cover themselves they take shots right and left of almost every scene so that the film editor may have plenty of material on hand to use in case a scene does not 'cut.' By having the cameraman photograph many 'takes' of the same action, he hopes that somebody will put them together to make something out of them. He shoots from all sides, from all angles, all around the actors. Thus the waste piles up.

"A capable director shoots no more than two or three 'takes' if neither the first or the second 'take' answers his requirements. Only when an actor 'muffs' his lines is he compelled to continue shooting 'takes' until that actor pronounces his lines correctly. Under such circumstances, he is justified for shooting many 'takes.'

"The wise director has his film editor on the set, watching every scene while the shooting goes on. If the film editor thinks that a certain scene will not 'cut' as it is shot, he warns the director and a modification is made on the spot. The bigger the director, the more easily he accepts his film editor's suggestions. The director who shoots 'wild' is the one who accepts no suggestions lest it be said that he does not know his business. It is an attempt to hide his ignorance, for a director who knows his business realizes that this is a composite art and, being such, every detail cannot be thought out by one person. Oftentimes an 'outsider' will see something that the director may miss, for the director is immersed in the details of handling his actors and of seeing that everything on the set is correct. If he is an intelligent director, he will invariably accept a suggestion, not only from his film editor, but also from his script clerk, and even from a grip. (Editor's Note: A 'grip' is a general technician.) Such a director does not have to shoot all around the actors; he knows what the script calls for and he goes about getting it.

"Some studios construct their scripts with only master scenes. (Editor's Note: A master scene gives the director

only a general idea of the action, leaving it to his discretion how to split it into individual scenes so as to make the action unfold smoothly and logically.) While such a method of screen-play construction is economical, it requires that the director know his business. The good Lord help the studio if the director who is given such a screen play should happen to lack the power of visualization.

"Another fault with some directors is the fact that often, when they keep on shooting additional 'takes' of a scene, they fail to tell the players why they are shooting the new 'take', with the result that the actor repeats the error, if an error was the cause of the 're-take.'

"Most directors keep on shooting a scene over and over again because raw stock is, in their opinion, cheap; they forget that, not only time is consumed, but printing and developing cost money."

Another film editor told me that he had seen a director shoot 'take' after 'take' of miniature scenes where there was no action and no chance for anything to go wrong. "It was," as he put it, "cruel waste."

* * *

Of the members of the craft that know more about the ability or lack of ability of directors, none is more qualified to speak, excepting the cameraman, than a member of the grip craft. (Editor's Note: A "grip" is, as it has already been said, a general technician, a sort of "jack-of-all-trades." A head grip told me that it would take a day for him to define what the duties of a grip are. Neither the director nor the cameraman can make a move without him. A skilled grip is a great asset.) So I sought the opinion of one of them, a person with whose knowledge I am thoroughly familiar. He said to me:

"I have seen directors shoot 'take' after 'take' without any rhyme or reason. Their only excuse was that they were trying to attain perfection. And I have seen directors shoot sequences that cost thousands of dollars, afterwards thrown on the 'cutting room floor.'

Of course, often the directors were not responsible for the fact that the sequence was superfluous; when the director is handed a script and is asked to shoot it, the fault lies with the faulty construction of the script. And the unit producer should have seen to it that the script was right. But in the case of directors with a name, they are as much to blame, for the reason that, before shooting starts, the director is handed the script and is asked to read it with a view to making suggestions for alterations.

"Anyway, you want to know about waste and here it is.

"We watch the director and, if we had not worked with him before, we know at once whether he knows his business or not by the way he acts. A good director seldom raises his voice; he knows what he wants and he doesn't have to shout his orders to the actors. Such a director shoots few 'takes.' On the other hand, the faker shouts so that there is no mistake that he is heard, for he thinks that only by shouting can he impress the actors and the technicians of his genius.

"I have worked with directors who gave their orders to the actors during actual shooting. It is true that they spoke their orders in either scenes or spots in the scenes where there was no dialogue. but the 'virgin' sound track was ruined, and the dubbing department had to use library sound to replace the sound that was ruined.

"But library sound can never be as satisfactory as original sound, for example, when the actor's foot sinks into sand, you hear a crunching sound, which is in unison with the movement of the foot. To use library sound to take the

(Continued on last page)

"The Big Noise" with Laurel and Hardy

(20th Century-Fox, October; time, 74 min.)

A typical Laurel and Hardy program slapstick comedy; it will undoubtedly amuse children, and it should please the avid followers of this comedy team. Others, however, will probably find it quite tedious, for the story is extremely silly, the comedy situations dragged out, and the slapstick gags too familiar to be funny. Its seventy-four minutes running time is much too long. As a matter of fact, the whole thing shapes up as two-reeler material stretched to feature length:—

Fearing for the safety of his invention, a deadly high explosive, Arthur Space telephones a detective agency for two men. The message is taken by Laurel and Hardy, janitors cleaning the office, who, seeing an opportunity to better themselves, report to Space's home as detectives. Their stay at the house creates no end of confusion because of the many mechanical gadgets Space had installed in his home. Meanwhile, in the house next door, a gang of desperadoes, headed by Frank Fenton and his wife (Veda Ann Borg), planned to steal the secret bomb and to sell it to a foreign government. The gang gains entrance to Space's home when Doris Merrick, Veda's unsuspecting sister, becomes friendly with Space. Learning that the War Department had asked Space to bring his bomb to Washington, the gang attempts to steal it. But Laurel and Hardy, thinking fast, lock the criminals in a closet. Space decides to throw the gangsters off the trail by sending the boys to Washington, ahead of him, with a dummy bomb. En route by train, the boys receive a telegram from Space informing them that they had taken the real bomb. Realizing that the gang would catch up with them, the boys leave the train and head for an airport, where they unwittingly board a radio-controlled target plane used by the Army for gunnery practice. The plane takes off suddenly and the boys find themselves shot at. Forced to parachute, they discover themselves over the ocean, right above a Jap submarine. Hardy drops the secret bomb for a direct hit, sinking the submarine. The merit of Space's explosive is proved to the War Department, and the two amateur detectives win wide acclaim.

W. Scott Darling wrote the screen play, Sol M. Wurtzel produced it, and Mal St. Clair directed it. The cast includes Bobby Blake, Phil Van Zandt and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Impatient Years" with Jean Arthur, Charles Coburn and Lee Bowman

(Columbia, Sept. 7; time, 90 min.)

A fair romantic comedy-drama, one that will have to depend on Jean Arthur's marquee value for whatever business it will do. The story idea—what to do about hasty war marriages—is good, but the picture fails to answer the problem because of an artificial story that builds up to a series of time-worn comedy situations, few of which provoke more than a grin. For example, one is asked to believe that a soldier and his wife, after being away from each other for slightly more than a year, would greet each other with a limp handshake, like total strangers, even though they had known each other for only four days prior to his departure overseas, and she had since borne him a child. It just isn't true to life. No fault can be found with any of the players; they really try hard, but the inept script proves to be too much of a handicap:—

Jean Arthur and Lee Bowman, her soldier husband, ask Judge Edgar Buchanan to dissolve their marriage because they felt like strangers to each other. Charles Coburn, Jean's father, intercedes and suggests to the Judge that the young couple retrace their actions during the four days when they first knew each other in the hope that they would recapture their love. The Judge orders them to follow the suggestion. Jean and Bowman go to San Francisco, where they relive their romance in minute detail, causing no end of confusion to the people they come in contact with. On the fourth day, the young couple realize their love. While celebrating, Jean becomes ill and, in jest, tells Bowman that he must have poisoned her. The remark is overheard by the hotel clerk, who summons Coburn to save his daughter. After a series of complications in which Coburn believes Bowman is insane, because he catches him smothering Jean with a pillow (to cure her hiccups), Jean and Bowman return home for a joyous reunion with their baby.

Virginia Van Upp wrote the screen play, and Irving Cummings produced and directed it. The cast includes Charley Grapewin, Harry Davenport, Frank Jenks, Charles Arnt and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Babes on Swing Street" with Peggy Ryan and Ann Blyth

(Universal, Oct. 27; time, 70 min.)

As indicated by the title, this is another program musical in which most of the action revolves around teen-aged youngsters. As such, it is a fair entertainment, and it should fit nicely wherever something light is needed to round out a double bill. The story is thin and trite, and at the slightest provocation some one either bursts into song or starts to dance. Peggy Ryan is her usual boisterous but ingratiating self, making the most of her well known comedy and musical talents. Others contributing to the musical end of the picture are June Preisser, Ann Blyth and Marion Hutton, who sing to the accompaniment of Freddie Slack and his orchestra. Andy Devine and Leon Errol contribute the comedy. A high spot is Sidney Miller's comedy impersonations of different stars:—

To help further the musical education of a group of talented but poor youngsters, Ann Blyth, niece of wealthy Leon Errol, suggests to them that they establish a night-club for teen-aged boys and girls, the profits of which would be used for their professional training. Errol, whose wealth was controlled by his sister (Alma Kruger), because he would not come into his inheritance until he reached the age of fifty, learns of Ann's plan and decides to help the youngsters. Informing his sister that he required the use of a large recreation hall, which was part of his inheritance, Errol turns the hall over to the youngsters and helps them to convert it into a night-club. On dress rehearsal night, Miss Kruger learns of Errol's deception and orders every one out of the hall. Errol, determined to have his way, stages a fake suicide attempt, compelling Miss Kruger to change her mind. On opening night, Miss Kruger discovers that the suicide attempt had been a hoax. She telephones the police and demands that they eject everyone from the hall. One of the policemen recognizes Errol as an old school chum, and a discussion of their ages brings out the fact that Errol was fifty-three years old, thus making him legally entitled to his inheritance. With the recreation hall now under his control, Errol permits the night-club to be opened, thus assuring the youngsters of their musical educations.

Howard Dimsdale and Eugene Conrad wrote the screen play, Bernard W. Burton produced it, and Edward Lilley directed it. The cast includes Anne Gwynne, Kirby Grant and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"In the Meantime, Darling" with Jeanne Crain and Frank Latimore

(20th Century-Fox, October; time, 72 min.)

This is a fairly pleasant comedy-drama, of program grade, revolving around the trials and tribulations of a young bride, who spends her honeymoon with her soldier-husband in a crowded rooming house near a training camp. The story, though thin, has considerable human interest, and its holds one's interest to a fair degree because of its topical nature. Jeanne Crain, of "Home in Indiana" fame, is an effective performer, and makes a sympathetic character of the heroine. The comedy, though not of the type to provoke hearty laughter, is fairly amusing:—

Accompanied by her wealthy parents (Eugene Pallette and Mary Nash), Jeanne Crain comes to an old-fashioned hotel on the outskirts of an army camp to marry Lieutenant Frank Latimore. The hotel, which offered accommodations only to officers and their wives, was the only one in the vicinity, and, because of the limited space and the help shortage, the army wives had instituted a cooperative work plan to ease the burden of Jane Randolph, the hotel manager. Despite her efforts to cooperate, Jeanne finds herself constantly misunderstood by the other women, because of her haughty airs and her inability to make herself useful. She becomes rebellious and almost quarrels with Jane, but when she learns that Jane's husband had been killed in action she realizes that her conduct had been shameful, and determines to change her ways. Worried over the possibility of Latimore being sent overseas, Jeanne writes to her father and suggests that he use his political connections to keep Latimore in camp permanently. Latimore, learning of the suggestion, becomes furious. They quarrel, and Jeanne decides to return home to her family. But when Latimore finds a book about infant care in his room, he mistakenly believes that Jeanne was to become a mother, and he hurries to the railroad station to intercept her. That same evening, Latimore's detachment is ordered overseas. Before his departure, Jeanne informs him that she had been studying to help in the hotel's nursery, and that he was mistaken about

her becoming a mother. Latimore, at first crestfallen, embraces Jeanne and vows to raise a large family when he returns at the war's end.

Arthur Kober and Michael Uris wrote the screen play, and Otto Preminger produced and directed it. The cast includes Stanley Prager, Gale Robbins, Doris Merrick, Elizabeth Risdon and others.

Suitable for all.

"The Master Race" with George Coulouris, Stanley Ridges and Osa Massen

(RKO, no release date set; time, 97 min.)

A forceful drama. Unlike most anti-Nazi pictures produced recently. "The Master Race" treats the subject from a fresh and significant angle—the two-fold problem facing the Allies in gaining the confidence of the people of liberated countries, and in preventing the Nazis from secretly sowing seeds of hatred and discord in these liberated areas in preparation for a third World War. It is an interest-holding story, expertly directed and well performed by a capable cast. Edward A. Golden, whose previous picture, "Hitler's Children," was a phenomenal success, is entitled to credit, not only for his intelligent handling of an all-important problem, but also for his foresight in guarding against the possibility of his production becoming out of date with the coming of peace; he has treated the story in a manner that will keep it timely for many months, even if Germany should surrender within the next few weeks. The picture deserves to be shown everywhere, for it will do much to awaken the people to the scheming deceptions and devices that have been and still are employed by the German militarists:—

In Berlin, Colonel George Coulouris, a Junker militarist, informs a group of officers that the German armies are collapsing. He instructs them to dedicate themselves to the task of laying the groundwork for a third World War. Coulouris, posing as a Belgian patriot, has himself shipped to a Nazi concentration camp in Kolar, Belgium. When a United Nations detachment, led by American Major Stanley Ridges, liberates the town, the prisoners, Coulouris among them, are freed. Coulouris compels Helen Beverly, a local collaborationist, to accept him as a patriotic relative, and to let him stay at her home. Learning that Paul Guilfoyle, whom Ridges had appointed as his civilian aid, was dissatisfied with local conditions, Coulouris cultivates his friendship and uses him as an easy dupe to spread suspicion among the villagers against the Allies. After a series of other incidents in which Coulouris murders Miss Beverly and incites Guilfoyle to blow up the local prison, because some of the Nazi prisoners wished to help in the reconstruction work, a few of the surviving Nazis identify Coulouris. He is sentenced to death and executed, just as word of Germany's surrender arrives.

There is considerable human interest and tragedy in a by-plot concerning Lloyd Bridges, a young patriot, who returns to the liberated town to find his sweetheart (Nancy Gates) scorned because of her mother's (Miss Beverly) conduct. There is tragedy also in the fact that his sister, Osa Massen, was bitter and ashamed, because she had to submit to the Nazis, and had borne an illegitimate child.

Herbert J. Biberman, Anne Froelick, and Rowland Leigh wrote the screen play, Robert Golden produced it, and Mr. Biberman directed it. The cast includes Carl Esmond, Morris Carnovsky, Gavin Muir and others.

"Tall in the Saddle" with John Wayne and Ella Raines

(RKO, no release date set; time, 87 min.)

A thrilling western melodrama, of greater magnitude than the average picture of this type; it should easily please the western fans, while the rank-and-file should find much in it to thrill them. The story is interesting and suspenseful, has a few fierce fist fights, a good deal of shooting, exciting horse riding, a love affair, and good comedy touches. John Wayne is properly effective as the hero, thrilling one with his display of courage and resourcefulness in the face of danger. Ella Raines is outstanding as the fiery heroine, and George "Gabby" Hayes provokes considerable laughter by his antics:—

En route to the KC ranch to start work as a foreman, John Wayne learns that the owner had been murdered, and that the ranch had been inherited by Audrey Long, an Eastern girl, and by Elisabeth Risdon, her aunt. On his first day in town, Wayne humiliates Russell Wade in a poker game. Ella Raines, Wade's fiery-tempered sister, tries to run Wayne out of town, but Wayne humiliates her, too. Determined to get even, Ella orders her stepfather and ranch

manager (Don Douglas) to hire Wayne so that she could have the satisfaction of firing him. Wayne, having no desire to work for Miss Risdon, accepts the job. Audrey visits Wayne and confides to him that she did not trust her aunt. She asks Wayne to obtain a letter written by her aunt to Ward Bond, a crooked judge, who was handling the KC ranch's affairs, which would prove that she was of age and capable of managing her own affairs. Wayne's interest in Audrey arouses Ella's jealousy. Wayne, attempting to get the letter from Bond, uncovers evidence indicating that Ella's brother knew who murdered the ranch owner. While questioned by Wayne, Wade is mysteriously shot dead. Wayne is blamed for the murder, but he escapes and, with the help of Ella, and George "Gabby" Hayes, a drunken derelict, whom he had befriended, goes on the trail of the murderer. After a series of events, Wayne captures Bond and compels him to confess that Ella's stepfather had killed the ranch owner because he wanted his land, and he had shot Wade because he knew of the crime. Bond confesses also that Wayne was really the dead ranch owner's next of kin, and that he and Miss Risdon had used Audrey to swindle him out of the ranch. The murders solved, Wayne takes Ella for his bride.

Michael Hogan and Paul P. Fix wrote the screen play, Robert Fellows produced it, and Edwin L. Marin directed it. The cast includes Emory Parnell, Paul P. Fix, Raymond Hatton, Frank Puglia and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Frenchman's Creek" with Joan Fontaine and Arturo de Cordova

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 113 min.)

A good costume entertainment, lavishly produced and photographed in Technicolor. It should do exceptionally good business because of the widely-read novel on which the story is based, and of the popularity of Joan Fontaine. Set in the seventeenth century, the story is an adventurous romantic drama revolving around the escapades of a beautiful but unhappily married aristocrat, who falls in love with a swashbuckling French pirate. Pictures dealing with pirates generally have more excitement than there is in this one, nevertheless, it has a fair quota of thrills, including sword duels, the hijacking of a merchantman, and all the other swaggering doings identified with pictures of this type. It does, however, have many slow spots, and some judicious cutting would help matters considerably. Joan Fontaine makes an enticing heroine, enacting her role with what appears to be a tongue-in-cheek exuberance. Arturo de Cordova, as the pirate chief, looks more dashing than he actually is. Basil Rathbone is ludicrously leering as the foppish villain, whom Joan murders in a fight for her honor. Cecil Kellaway, as the understanding servant, is the best of the supporting cast. Because of the sex situations, the picture is unsuitable for children:—

Tiring of London society, of her foppish husband (Ralph Forbes), and of the persistent attentions of Basil Rathbone, Forbes' best friend, Joan Fontaine, an aristocrat, takes her two children and leaves for her estate on the Cornish coast. Arriving there, she finds that the estate had been used as headquarters by a pirate gang, led by Arturo de Cordova, whose raids on estates nearby had raised the ire of the Cornish aristocrats. Joan meets the pirate chief when he brings his ship into a hidden anchorage in a creek nearby. Both are attracted to each other, and Joan, in an adventurous mood, dresses as a cabin boy and accompanies him on a foray. Meanwhile her husband and Rathbone come to the estate, summoned by the Cornish gentry, who believed the pirate's hideout was in the vicinity, and needed help to capture him. At a dinner, with Joan presiding as hostess, the aristocrats lay their plans for the capture. Joan's shrewd methods to delay them, so that the pirate might escape, are interrupted by de Cordova's daring entrance with a group of his best swordsmen. He disarms the aristocrats, locks them in a room, and bids Joan goodbye. The aristocrats manage to free themselves and give chase. Rathbone remains behind and tries to force his unwelcome attentions on Joan. Rather than submit, she kills him. Meanwhile de Cordova is captured as he successfully holds off the aristocrats to gain time for his crew's escape. The aristocrats make plans to hang him, but Joan effects his escape through a ruse. De Cordova begs Joan to sail away with him, but she realizes her duty to her children, and chooses to remain at the estate.

Talbot Jennings wrote the screen play from the book by Daphne du Maurier, David Lewis produced it, and Mitchell Leisen directed it. B. G. DeSylva was the executive producer. The cast includes Nigel Bruce and others.

place of the original sound is impossible; no 'phony' sound can ever work in unison with the action in the film.

"Why do they do it? First, because they do not know any better; secondly, because they want to impress the studio head with the fact that they are hard workers, and that they have great knowledge. When the studio executive sits in the projection room to look at the 'dailies,' (*Editor's Note: The "dailies" are the film pieces that were shot in a day.*) he is usually impressed when he hears the director give orders to the cameraman to change lenses, the type of lens to use (even though often he does not know the difference between lenses—the task of fitting the proper lens belonging to the cameraman,) and to what location to move. The studio executive who does not know says to himself: 'What a hard-working director!' He never stops to figure out what this director is costing the company. If he knew, he would have taken the director off the picture at once.

"A good crew of experienced grips, an intelligent script girl, a good assistant director,—a good all around technical crew have often saved a director from blundering. Often the director lacks the necessary knowledge, but when he is 'regular' we break our necks to help him out. But the Lord help the director who is not only ignorant, but also mean; we, the technicians, won't do anything for him even if we actually do not sabotage him, and he eventually 'breaks his neck'."

I don't know how much good these articles will do in bringing the question of production wastefulness to the industry's attention. The studio heads who gave me the information that is contained in them believe that they will do much good. Anyway, I have presented to the industry these facts with the hope that some attempt will be made to curb the wastefulness of the directors and to induce the producers to see to it that the scripts are prepared without any superfluous matter.

These facts may do some good also in inducing the studio heads to discontinue the practice of stretching the length of the big features in an effort to compel the exhibitors to give up the double features, particularly the double-features of two top features.

Every producer fears the consequences after the war unless production waste is eliminated. The American pictures will have to compete with the pictures that will be made abroad. Russia has representatives in this country studying the American production methods and technique. The British Government has already expressed its intention of aiding the British film industry after the war. France will resume production after the war, and the French Government will, no doubt, aid the industry either with quotas or with other restrictions, and the French directors at present in the United States will return to France to produce, richer in knowledge. Mexico is now producing pictures that fit better the Central and South American markets, because they understand the mood of the Latin American inhabitants better than do the American producers. Germany, too, will contribute its share of meritorious pictures—UFA produced many outstanding pictures before the war. All these pictures will offer stiff competition to the American pictures. The only way by which our pictures could compete with them advantageously is for our producers to make better pictures than they have made heretofore. And in order for them to make better pictures, every dollar that is now wasted should be put into picture values.

The lush times that are prevailing now will not prevail always. It is possible that times will, after the war, become normal again. Consequently, unless our producers begin practicing economy now, the industry will find itself in a tough spot.

The exhibitor, too, can do his share of economy by eliminating double-billing, or at least the double-billing of two top features.

PROPAGANDISTS ON A NEW TACK!

Under this heading, Allied States Association has issued the following bulletin, dated September 19:

"It has come to the attention of this office that the affiliated interests, in their efforts to stampede exhibitors into opposition to the Attorney General's efforts in their behalf, have shifted from the absurd one-at-a-time scare to the wildest claims regarding the effect of theatre divorcement and divestiture on independent exhibitors and small circuits.

"According to reports they are even going so far as to claim that the policy of the Department of Justice is to require that an exhibitor who has more than one theatre in a

city of 5,000 or over shall dispose of all theatres in excess of one, in order to create competition!

"These claims, if not corrected, may cause unnecessary concern in independent ranks and might even influence some exhibitors to play into the hands of the propagandists.

"Allied and cooperating leaders should point out to their members at the earliest opportunity, that there is no power anywhere to dissolve a circuit, or to compel an exhibitor to dispose of theatres, except for violation of the Sherman Act. It is no violation of that act for an exhibitor to have more than one theatre, or even all the theatres, in a town of any size.

"It is the abuse of great buying power to force favors from the distributors and drive out competitors that determines whether the law has been violated and, consequently, whether a circuit should be dissolved.

"The only case involving the dissolution of an independent circuit is the Crescent Case, which is now pending in the Supreme Court on appeal. But that case involved a large and powerful circuit which had used its buying power to prevent competitors from getting product. The District Court ordered the circuit to dispose of such number of its theatres as might be necessary to break the back of its monopoly.

"Similar charges of abuse of power are made in the pending suits against the Schine and Griffith circuits and if the Crescent decision is affirmed by the Supreme Court next fall, it is likely that those circuits also will be broken up.

"But the Department of Justice has no policy, and no authority, to disturb independent exhibitors and circuits who have not violated the law by exerting their buying power so as to injure competitors or force them out of business. If you have not violated the law, nothing can harm you."

"Mrs. Parkington" with Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon

(MGM, November; time, 124 min.)

Very Good! Skillfully produced, this is another triumph for the Greer Garson-Walter Pidgeon team, and their popularity alone is enough to insure the picture's box-office success. Based on the novel by Louis Bromfield, the story covers the period from 1872 to 1938, and it revolves around the highlights in the hectic life of an eighty-four-year-old woman from the time she was a housemaid in a thriving Nevada mining town up to the point where she became the matriarchal head of a parasitical family, with whom she was thoroughly disgusted. Told in a series of flashbacks, the story is an effective combination of human interest, romance, and comedy. Greer Garson is at her best, bringing warmth and understanding to a colorful role, and Walter Pidgeon, as her dynamic husband, handles his part in outstanding fashion. The supporting cast is very able. The usual MGM excellence prevails in the settings and costumes of the periods depicted:—

On Christmas Eve in 1938, Miss Garson learns that Edward Arnold, her pompous son-in-law, was involved in a fraudulent stock transaction, and needed financial help lest he be arrested. She calls her family together and asks them if they would be willing to forego their inheritance to keep Arnold out of prison. While the family bickers over the personal loss to themselves, Miss Garson's thoughts carry her back to the year 1872 when Walter Pidgeon, her late husband, had taken her to New York as his bride, after her mother had been accidentally killed in one of his mines. He had enlisted the aid of Agnes Moorehead, a French Baroness and his former sweetheart, to teach her how to dress and act. Pidgeon had built a magnificent mansion for her, and he became enraged when New York socialites spurned his invitations to a ball. As a result, he had ruined many of them by his stock market machinations. Shortly after the death of her son in 1899, Greer had sent Pidgeon to England while she remained at home to grieve. But she soon followed him when she learned that an English noblewoman (Tara Birell) had been acting as his hostess. With the sly help of the then Prince of Wales (Cecil Kellaway), she had broken up the affair. Shortly thereafter, Pidgeon had been killed in an auto accident. When the family members inform her that they refuse to help Arnold, Miss Garson announces that she will repay the stolen money even if it takes every penny of her fortune.

Robert Thoeren and Polly James wrote the screen play, Leon Gordon produced it, and Tay Garnett directed it. The cast includes Gladys Cooper, Frances Rafferty, Tom Drake, Dan Duryea, Selena Royale, Fortunio Bonanova and others.

Suitable for all.

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The New Season Dawns for Columbia Pictures

Most of you will recall that Columbia, when it announced its 1944-45 program last June, changed from a policy of making many promises to making no promises at all. Unlike previous years, when it listed the new season's forthcoming productions together with the outstanding stars that were to appear in them, this year Columbia listed its story properties and roster of stars and featured players under contract, and stated that the program would be selected from the listings, or from additional material acquired or produced during the year. Columbia's explanation for presenting the new season's product in this fashion was that it wanted to "remain elastic in its thinking" and "make such changes as it believes to be in the best interests of an improved program, and consequently, in the best interests of the theatres served."

In other words, Columbia's executives asked the exhibitors to buy their company's 1944-45 season's product on the basis of faith in their good judgment and business integrity. In effect, they said: "Leave it to us boys, we'll do the right thing by you."

While Columbia has refrained from making any direct promises to the exhibitors as regards the specific pictures it will produce on the 1944-45 program, it has, in the opinion of this paper, resorted to what might be termed "quasi-promises." In other words, it has announced, through publicity releases sent to the press for publication, that it has signed certain stars for certain pictures, thus indicating to the exhibitors the magnitude of the productions it will make this season, yet promising them nothing.

A recent Columbia publicity release, for example, states that, at a special meeting that was to be held in Chicago, the Columbia home office executives and district managers were to lay plans for the distribution, advertising and publicity of its important Technicolor production, "A Song to Remember," starring Paul Muni and Merle Oberon. (*Editor's Note: "A Song to Remember" was originally promised to the 1943-44 contract-holders as "At Night We Dream." It has also been known as the "Love of Madame Sand." Shooting on this picture was completed early last March, but Columbia withheld it from the program and now offers it again, at higher terms, no doubt, as a special, "separate and apart from any program."*) The publicity release states also that "distribution and advertising plans will also be discussed on a number of other top productions to be released within the next few months. These include: 'Together Again,' which stars Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer with Charles Coburn; 'Tonight and Every Night,' the Technicolor production starring Rita Hayworth . . . ; 'Counterattack,' which stars Paul Muni . . . ; and 'Over 21,' for which Irene Dunne has been named." (*Edi-*

tor's Note: "Together Again," originally known as "Road to Yesterday," and "Tonight and Every Night," originally titled, "Heart of a City," are two more top productions that were withheld from the 1943-44 contract-holders.)

How many of these aforementioned top productions will be delivered on the 1944-45 program is, of course, a big question. Columbia, smarting under the criticism that had been heaped upon it because of its notorious record of broken promises, shrewdly guarded against more of this same criticism by making no definite promises for the 1944-45 season. But a company that asks its prospective customers to do business with it on the basis of faith in its good judgment and business integrity must either stand or fall on its record of past accomplishments. And Columbia's record is very bad.

We need not go any further back than the 1943-44 season, just completed, to prove the unfaithfulness with which this company has consistently treated its customers.

The following are the top pictures Columbia promised but did not deliver to the 1943-44 contract-holders:

"Heart of a City," now titled, "Tonight and Every Night," with Rita Hayworth, in Technicolor; "Gone Are the Days," with Rita Hayworth and Gary Grant, in Technicolor; "Road to Yesterday," now titled, "Together Again," with Irene Dunne; "The First Woman Doctor," with Olivia de Havilland; "At Night We Dream," with Paul Muni. As said before, this production is now offered, under the title, "A Song to Remember," as a 1944-45 special release; "The Life of Al Jolson." No cast mentioned.

With the exception of "The First Woman Doctor," every one of these top productions has been listed among the properties from which Columbia will select its 1944-45 program. But remember, no promise has been made that any one of them will be delivered. Which pictures will ultimately be delivered depends on how "elastic" the Columbia executives remain in their thinking. Consequently, you may find some of these top productions offered once again on the 1945-46 program.

And let us not lose sight of the fact that, if these six top productions had been delivered and allocated to the higher brackets where they rightfully belonged, the contract-holder would not have been compelled to exhibit in their place six other pictures, none of which match the potential box-office value of the undelivered pictures, and some of which are of no better than program grade—yet all of them snuggled comfortably into the high allocation brackets.

(Continued on last page)

**"My Buddy" with Donald Barry,
Ruth Terry and Alexander Granach**

(Republic, Oct. 12; time, 69 min.)

Unpleasant program fare. The idea underlying "My Buddy"—the problem of post-war jobs for returning servicemen—is timely and important; unfortunately, the picture does nothing more than pose the problem in a brief prologue and epilogue, and in between resorts to a trite and sordid gangster story about a young soldier who returns from World War I and engages in a life of crime because of his inability to find honest employment. The point of the story is, of course, that we must plan intelligently now if we are to keep the returning soldiers on the straight and narrow path.

As a gangster melodrama, the picture should satisfy the avid followers of this type of entertainment, in spite of the fact that it is totally lacking in originality either in story or in treatment. But as an example of what might happen to returning servicemen in the event they experience difficulty in finding employment, the selection of a gangster story is in the worst possible taste, for it may cause to the families of fighting men no end of worry lest their boy turn to a life of crime. Another bad feature is that it lends itself to political propaganda, which is something a motion picture designed for entertainment, even though it has a message, should avoid. Republic had an important subject to work with, but it muffed the opportunity.

In the development of the story, John Litel, a priest, appears before a Post-War Planning Committee and, to aid them in their work, relates to them the story of Donald Barry, who had returned from the war in 1919 to find his mother living in poverty. Peeved because no jobs were available, Barry had joined up with Alexander Granach, a gangster leader. He had been caught smuggling bootleg whiskey, and had been given a five-year jail term after Granach had double-crossed him. In prison, Barry had organized his own "mob," and upon release had engaged in a bloody gang war with Granach to gain control of the "rackets." He had ultimately killed Granach, and had been killed himself in a gun battle with the police.

Arnold Manoff wrote the screen play, Eddy White produced it, and Steve Sekely directed it. The cast includes Lynne Roberts, George E. Stone, Ray Walker, Emma Dunn and others.

Not for children.

**"When the Lights Go On Again" with
Jimmy Lydon and Barbara Belden**

(PRC, Sept. 15; time, 74 min.)

Very Good! Based on a theme that is timely, this human interest drama is the sort of entertainment that will be understood and enjoyed by all. It is strong enough for single-billing in many houses, while in double-feature situations the co-feature will have to be pretty good to crowd this one from the upper spot. It concerns itself with the rehabilitation of a young soldier, who returns from overseas a victim of amnesia. Under the very capable direction of William K. Howard, the story is told in an honest, direct, and realistic manner. Mr. Howard's sympathetic handling and thorough understanding of his subject has resulted in a number of deeply moving situations, some of which will bring tears to the eyes, particularly to those of women. Jimmy Lydon, who is best known for his "Henry Aldrich" characterization, turns in a bril-

liant performance as the young soldier, proving his worth as a dramatic actor. The courage and helpfulness displayed by the boy's family and his young wife, in their efforts to rehabilitate him, conveys a good moral in these times:—

Given a furlough because of "combat fatigue," Jimmy Lydon heads for home from the South Pacific. In Kansas City, he is injured in a taxicab accident, causing him to develop amnesia. The bewildered boy is found by Regis Toomey, a sympathetic newspaperman, who recognizes his condition and offers to take him to Middletown, where Jimmy lived. En route, Jimmy falls asleep. He dreams about his romance with Barbara Belden, daughter of Harry Shannon, local newspaper editor, and about the opposition of his father (Grant Mitchell), a wealthy real estate owner, who wanted him to forget Barbara and to marry a girl of high social standing. Rebelling against his father's desire to run his life for him, Jimmy had quit school and had eloped with Barbara. The day after their honeymoon, Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Jimmy's enlistment in the Marines had brought about a reconciliation with his father, prior to his departure overseas. Jimmy awakens as the train reaches Middletown. Toomey, in consideration of Jimmy's strangeness, takes him to a hotel for the night. On the following morning, Toomey visits Jimmy's family and Barbara, and explains what kind of care and devotion Jimmy must have, and how they must react to his condition, in order that he recover. As the days go by, Jimmy, under the patient handling of his family and his wife, slowly recovers as he begins to recognize familiar scenes and objects. His memory is restored to normalcy when he recognizes a favorite trysting place he and Barbara had often visited.

Milton Lazurus wrote the screen play from an original story by Frank Craven, Leon Fromkess produced it, and William K. Howard directed it. The cast includes Dorothy Peterson, George Cleveland, Warren Mills and others.

Suitable for all.

**"The Unwritten Code" with Tom Neal,
Roland Varno and Ann Savage**

(Columbia, Oct. 26; time, 61 min.)

Ordinary program fare. It is another "assembly-line" anti-Nazi melodrama, produced on a modest budget, with little about it that is distinctive. The story lacks originality, and it leans heavily on the long arm of coincidence in the development of the plot. Since it moves at a fairly fast pace, however, and since parts of it are fairly exciting, it may get by with audiences that pay little attention to story detail. Neither the direction nor the performances are anything to brag about. Set this one down for the lower-half of a mid-week double bill:—

When an Allied ship carrying German war prisoners is torpedoed, Roland Varno and Otto Reicher, Nazi soldiers, swim to a life raft on which a British officer lay wounded. Varno, who had been educated in England, kills the Britisher and steals his credentials and uniform. He is rescued and brought to a hospital in the United States, where he feigns an arm injury in order to remain in the country. Reicher, who, too, had been saved, was interned in a war prisoner's camp near the hospital. Ann Savage, a sympathetic nurse at the hospital, offers to take Varno to her home to recuperate, in order to make more room available at the hospital. Sergeant Tom Neal, Ann's boy-friend,

becomes jealous when Varno takes an interest in her. His jealousy turns to suspicion, however, when Bobby Larson, Ann's young brother, informs him that he had seen Varno embrace Ann against her will, and that he had moved his injured arm. Meanwhile Varno learns of Reicher's presence in the prison camp, and lays plan to arm the prisoners and to set them free. Reicher escapes from the camp and is hidden in a barn by Varno. Bobby discovers Reicher, and sends one of his young friends for help. Learning that Reicher had been found out, Varno, clinging to his role of Britisher, shoots the luckless Nazi just as Neal and a contingent of soldiers arrive on the scene. But Neal, having investigated Varno's credentials through the British Consul, exposes and imprisons him. Varno is shot and killed in an attempted escape.

Leslie T. White and Charles Kenyon wrote the screen play, Sam White produced it, and Herman Rotsten directed it. The cast includes Howard Freeman and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"The Climax" with Boris Karloff,
Susanna Foster and Turhan Bey**
(Universal, Oct. 20; time, 86 min.)

This suspense drama, with operatic music, is comparable to Universal's "Phantom of the Opera" in its artistic production, lavish settings, and Technicolor photography. As entertainment, however, it is only fair, not only because of the far-fetched story, but also because of the stagey situations. And the players, with the exception of Boris Karloff, who is properly sinister as a demented physician, do not help matters much—their performances are wooden. It has, however, a fair share of suspense and chills, brought about by Karloff's fanatical machinations as he tries to still the heroine's voice through hypnotism. Good music is interpolated in the story in such a way that it does not retard the action. The closing scenes are fairly exciting, even though the outcome is obvious. The action frequently lags, and there is little comedy relief. Universal produced "The Climax" once before, in 1930, but considerable changes have been made for this version:—

Karloff, physician of the Royal Opera House, broods over his loneliness for June Vincent, a great opera star, whom he had murdered secretly in a jealous rage ten years previously. Walking through the theatre, Karloff is astounded to hear a voice, uncannily like June's, singing "The Magic Voice" opera, which he considered sacred to the memory of the dead star. In the library, he finds Susanna Foster and Turhan Bey, music students, rehearsing the opera. Thomas Gomez, the opera's manager, grants Susanna an opportunity to sing and, at her debut, she becomes a great diva. Karloff becomes upset when he learns that Gomez planned to revive "The Magic Voice" with Susanna singing the leading role. He lures Susanna to his office for a throat examination, and there he exerts his hypnotic powers upon her to prevent her from singing. Under Karloff's spell, Susanna's voice breaks every time she attempts to sing. Karloff convinces Gomez that the young girl should spend several days at his home for a complete rest. Susanna, helpless, cannot resist. Gale Sondergaard, Karloff's housekeeper and former maid to the dead opera star, warns Bey that Karloff means to destroy Susanna. Bey manages to spirit Susanna out of the house, and he convinces her that her voice had not been affected.

By inducing the King to order a command performance of "The Magic Voice," Bey compels Gomez to give Susanna the leading role. On the eve of the performance, Karloff kidnaps Susanna from her dressing room, but she is rescued by Bey and returned to the theatre in time to sing. Driven insane by his frustration, Karloff rushes to a secret room containing the body of June. Both he and the body are devoured in flames when he accidentally upsets a lighted lamp.

Curt Siodmak and Lynn Starling wrote the screen play, and George Waggner produced and directed it. The cast includes George Dolenz, Ludwig Stossel, Jane Farrar and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"My Pal, Wolf," with Sharyn Moffett
and Jill Esmond**

(RKO, no release date set; time, 75 min.)

A pleasing program comedy-drama, best suited for theatres that cater to family audiences. There is a warm, heart-arresting quality about the story, which revolves around the trials and tribulations of a "poor-little-rich-girl," who seeks to keep an Army dog she had befriended, but the story is weakened considerably by a number of unbelievable situations and by the fact that it "wanders all over the lot." Had more attention been paid to the script, the picture might have emerged as a "sleeper." Sharyn Moffett, as the little heroine, is a very appealing child, and her performance is exceptionally good. No small amount of credit is due Grey Shadow, a highly-trained, intelligent police-dog. Since none of the players means anything at the box-office, the picture will require extensive exploitation to put it over:—

Because her parents were too engrossed with their respective business affairs, Sharyn leads a lonely life on a huge Virginia estate, with three good-hearted but shiftless servants, and a Norwegian family of caretakers on a nearby estate, as her only companions. Deciding that Sharyn needs a governess, her mother employs Jill Esmond for the post. Miss Esmond, a strict disciplinarian, becomes decidedly unpopular with the servants. When Sharyn tells her of finding a "wolf" in a cave in the woods, Miss Esmond harshly accuses the child of lying. Rebellious, Sharyn slips away to feed the animal, a big police-dog, which had been trapped at the bottom of an old dry well, only to become trapped herself. Wolf, the dog, escapes, and returns with a rescue party for Sharyn. Over the protests of Miss Esmond, Sharyn's father permits her to keep the dog. Miss Esmond, learning that Wolf had run away from a nearby army-dog training camp, notifies the authorities. Wolf is taken away, but he breaks out of camp and rejoins Sharyn. Accompanied by two of the Norwegian family's children, Sharyn, taking Wolf with her, "hitch-hikes" to Washington, where she appeals to the Secretary of War personally in an attempt to buy the dog. The Secretary sympathetically convinces Sharyn why the Army needed Wolf, and summons her parents to take her home. The parents resolve to spend more time with their daughter, and discharge Miss Esmond for her meanness. A few days later, Sharyn is made happy when the Secretary of War sends her a puppy police-dog.

Lillie Hayward, Leonard Praskins, and John Paxton wrote the screen play, Adrian Scott produced it, and Alfred Werker directed it. The cast includes Una O'Connor, George Cleveland, Charles Arnt, Bobby Larson and others.

Columbia's failure to live up to its 1943-44 promises does not come as a surprise; it comes along as the natural sequence in this company's long record of consistency in its policy of hocus-pocus—"now you see it; now you don't." Be assured that the reputation Columbia has built for itself is causing its executives no end of grief. According to confidential reports reaching this office, the Columbia salesmen are meeting with considerable exhibitor resistance because of their inability to offer a specific program. To get around this opposition, many of the salesmen may point to their company's "quasi-promises" as being indicative of what the program will be like. You should accept these "quasi-promises" at their face value—zero. This paper has often said and continues to say that there is only one way for you to do business with the Columbia salesman—make him write his company's promises into the contract.

THE INDUSTRY IN POLITICS

Under the slogan, "Hollywood-for-Dewey," a group of actors, writers and others have come out for Dewey, pledging themselves to work for his election as President. Very soon another group will, I am sure, come out pledging themselves, under the slogan, "Hollywood-for-Roosevelt," to work for the reelection of President Roosevelt.

Since our country is a democracy, in spirit as well as in substance, any citizen has the right to declare himself for the candidate of any party—we know that; but when a group of picture people wants to drag the industry into politics, that is another matter, for if the candidate should lose the election the consequences may be grave—they may bring upon the industry political punishment.

I say that the industry is being dragged into politics only because these picture people are using in their slogans the word "Hollywood." No one speaks or thinks of Hollywood as a community in the accepted sense of that term; to the American people, in fact the whole world, Hollywood is synonymous with motion pictures. Consequently, the use of the word "Hollywood" in a political group's slogan conveys to most people the idea, not that one group in a certain community is in favor of a particular candidate, but that the motion picture industry itself favors that candidate.

Since this is a presidential election, one that the entire populace is interested in, it behooves those picture people who wish to declare themselves for a particular candidate to do so in a manner that will not involve the industry as a whole. A presidential election certainly is not a non-partisan affair; people are either for or against each candidate. And that is true whether those people are part of the industry or entirely outside of it. The motion picture industry, however, should not be put in a position where it may be accused of acting as a unified group in fostering the election of any one candidate.

It must be remembered that the public's only contact with the industry is through the exhibitor. When the public resents some action of the industry, it expresses its displeasure by staying away from the theatres. An exhibitor who would purposely use his theatre for the support of a certain candidate takes his own chances on what the reaction of his patrons will be. But when an exhibitor who plays no partisan

politics stands to suffer because of the machinations of some political group, with whom he has no direct connection, but with whom it is his misfortune to be indirectly identified—by the remote fact that both he and they are engaged in different branches of the same industry, then that political group is guilty of a gross injustice, for having adopted a slogan that might cause a breach between the exhibitor and his patrons.

As a matter of fact, the public's feelings are not the only ones that might be aroused. I wonder whether those who have coined the slogan, "Hollywood-for-Dewey," or those who will remold it to read, "Hollywood-for-Roosevelt," have thought or will think of the other consequences.

If, after the election, a group of Republican Congressmen, if Dewey should lose, or of Democrats, if Roosevelt should lose, should try to introduce in Congress legislation adverse to the motion picture industry on the grounds that it is also a political organization, what will those proponents of "Hollywood-in-Politics" say or do?

There are plenty of good political names and political slogans for those who wish to take an active part in the candidacy of Mr. Dewey. And there are just as many good slogans and good names for those who wish to back President Roosevelt. But the word "Hollywood" should be kept out of all of them.

The industry has had a number of sad experiences in such matters, yet it seems as if some of us never learn.

"Goin' to Town" with Lum and Abner

(RKO, no release date set; time, 70 min.)

This is a typical Lum and Abner homespun program comedy, best suited for theatres that have found the other pictures in the series acceptable to their patrons. The comedy team's radio popularity should, of course, be of considerable help. The story is an innocuous affair, designed to fit Lum and Abner's rustic brand of humor, and one or two of the situations are fairly amusing, but for the most part the action is mild, causing one's interest to lag. A night-club sequence towards the finish serves as an excuse for a musical interlude, featuring Nils T. Granlund and his showgirls:—

Lum and Abner (Chester Lauck and Norris Goff) are made the victims of a practical joke when Andrew Tombes, a wealthy oil operator, while waiting in Pine Ridge for his car to be repaired, tells them that there is an oil pool under their general store and offers them a fortune for the property. The two rural storekeepers refuse the offer and induce their friends and neighbors to finance the drilling of a well. The venture proves unsuccessful, and Lum and Abner, faced with disgrace and bankruptcy, go to Chicago to see Tombes about financing further drilling. Their misadventures in Chicago bring them in contact with Herbert Rawlinson, Tombes' business rival, who offers to buy their property. Tombes' business partner, unaware that Tombes had perpetrated a practical joke, outbids Rawlinson and buys the worthless property, enabling Lum and Abner to repay their neighbors with a handsome profit to boot.

Charles E. Roberts and Charles R. Marion wrote the screen play, Frank Melford produced it, and Leslie Goodwins directed it. The cast includes Barbara Hale, Florence Lake, Dick Elliott and others.

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MISDIRECTED EXTRAVAGANCE

From time to time, exhibitors have written to me complaining about the distributors' waste in their direct mail advertising campaigns in connection with the sale of their pictures to the exhibitor.

The gist of most of these complaints is that the advertising campaigns are grossly overdone, not only in the number of repetitional mailing pieces, but also in the elaborateness of many of the mailing pieces. Some of the exhibitors feel that one broadside tells them all they want to know about a particular picture, and that, instead of mailing out additional broadsides on the same picture, a better purpose would be served if the distributors would put the cost of this extraneous material into the exploitation of the picture to the public. Other exhibitors feel that, if the direct mail campaign would be stopped after one coverage, the savings could be reflected in reduced film rentals.

No fault can be found with the distributors for trying to promote their pictures to the exhibitors, but, if I am to judge from some of the advertising material that reaches my office, there seems to be some justification for the exhibitor complaints. The time and expense that have gone into some of the repetitious mailings could indeed have been put to better use had they gone into the selling of the pictures to the public.

Not all the distributors, however, are wasteful in their sales promotion campaigns. One of the best examples of promoting a picture to the exhibitors is the policy followed by RKO, under the capable handling of Leon J. Bamberger, its sales promotion manager. Not only are RKO's sales promotion campaigns stopped after one coverage, but the mailing pieces are designed in so clever a fashion that each piece, after conveying its sales message to the exhibitors, can be used as a lobby display, both before and during the exhibition of the picture. For instance, the mailing piece used to promote "Step Lively" was a folder arrangement measuring 10" x 14½", which told its sales story as the exhibitor unfolded it. When opened in full, the piece measured 40" x 58"—lobby poster size, with one side designed to sell the picture to the public. Another clever mailing piece was the one used in promoting "Marine Raiders." This one, after telling its story to the exhibitor, could be taken apart and used as a set of pennants to be hung in the lobby. Mr. Bamberger has sent me a number of other mailing pieces, each cleverly designed to serve the same two-fold purpose already mentioned.

As said before, no fault can be found with the distributors for trying to exploit their pictures to the exhibitors, but most of them would do well to emulate RKO, not only in eliminating waste, but also in de-

signing broadsides that can be utilized by the exhibitors after they have served their original purpose.

The primary source of the entire industry's income is the public. Hence the exploitation material addressed to the exhibitor should have as its ultimate goal the public.

A SUGGESTION TO PRODUCERS— HOW TO FIGHT RESTRICTIONS ON AMERICAN PICTURES ABROAD

According to the trade papers, Argentina has formulated a decree whereby the exhibitors in that country are compelled to play a minimum of forty per cent Argentine pictures.

According to the September 5 issue of the *Film Daily*, the distributors in New York, after studying the decree that was put in effect in Argentina on August 15, this year, have found it encouraging in that it will make it possible for them to merchandise their pictures more extensively, thus making up the loss of revenue from the restrictions of the decree.

This paper believes that the distributors are, like the boy who passes by a graveyard at night time, whistling to keep up their courage.

Unless the Department of State is able to ease up such restrictions by threatening retaliation—a method that the State Department is reluctant to adopt—there is only one way by which the distributors could beat the game of the foreign governments: it is for them to send to those countries nothing but choice product. Just now, no country in the world can compete with this country in the production of good pictures, however small is the percentage of such pictures; and even the mediocre pictures produced in this country are, with rare exception, better than the best produced in foreign countries. Such being the case, the distributors in this country could beat the game of these foreign governments by sending to their countries only the best that is produced in this country. If that were to happen, the picture-going public, by comparing the quality of the native pictures, imposed on them by government decree, with the quality of the pictures sent there from this country, will know how far superior are the American pictures, and they will learn to wait until an American picture is shown before going to a picture show.

But who among the American producers will decide what should and what should not be sent abroad? They will not be able to agree among themselves, with the result that they will be unable to adopt a policy that would net them even greater revenue than they will be getting by sending pictures regardless of quality.

**"Irish Eyes Are Smiling" with June Haver,
Dick Haymes and Monty Woolley**

(20th Century-Fox, October; time, 90 min.)

Because of its engaging performances, melodious music, and good comedy, this latest of 20th Century-Fox's elaborate Technicolor musicals, which has its setting in the early 1900's, is the sort of entertainment that should go over very well with the rank-and-file. There is nothing unusual about the story, which is supposedly based on the career of Ernest R. Ball, well-known American composer of ballads that are still popular today, but it has some amusing comedy situations and romantic complications, and it holds one's interest all the way through. June Haver, a comparative newcomer, has a pleasing personality, and her singing and dancing talents are used to good advantage. Dick Haymes, popular crooner on the radio but new to the screen, gives a creditable performance as the young composer. Together, he and Miss Haver make a good romantic team. Leonard Warren, a baritone, and Blanche Thebom, soprano with the Metropolitan Opera Co., are excellent in their renditions of some of Ball's music. Monty Woolley, in the role of a caustic, unscrupulous promoter, is responsible for a good part of the comedy:—

Attempting to sell one of his ballads at a Cleveland burlesque theatre, Dick Haymes, a struggling composer, mistakes June Haver, a chorus girl, for Veda Ann Borg, the star. When Veda indignantly orders Haymes ejected, June comes to his defense and loses her job. Haymes falls desperately in love with June, but she leaves for New York to try her luck on Broadway. Desperately in need of money to follow her, Haymes earns it in a vaudeville theatre by putting on an exhibition match with Maxie Rosenbloom, a kindly prizefighter, who permits him to last three rounds. In New York, Haymes searches for June in vain, and finally secures work as a song "plugger." While "plugging" a song at a night-club, Haymes is ridiculed by Monty Woolley and Anthony Quinn, two gamblers, who were entertaining Beverly Whitney, a famous singer. Angered, Haymes discards his music and begins singing one of his own ballads. The song catches the guests' fancy, and Beverly offers to use it in her show. From then on success comes easy to Haymes, but he continues his search for June. While dining with Woolley, Beverly and Quinn, Haymes finds June working in the restaurant as a hat-check girl. At the table, he overhears Woolley bet Quinn that he can make a star within three months of the first girl to come out of the ladies lounge. Woolley had arranged with Beverly to come out first, but Haymes, without letting June in on the plan, arranges for her to be pushed out first. June loses her temper, and runs out. Beverly, lest June interfere with her interest in Haymes, secures a job for her in a New Jersey night-club to get her out of the way. After a series of complications in which Woolley foils Quinn's attempt to spirit June out of the country, Jane and Haymes are reunited, and she is starred in a Broadway show featuring Haymes' songs.

Earl Baldwin and John Tucker Battle wrote the screen play, Damon Runyon produced it, and Gregory Ratoff directed it. The cast includes Clarence Kolb, Chick Chandler and others.

Suitable for all.

**"None But the Lonely Heart" with
Cary Grant and Ethel Barrymore**

(RKO, no release date set; time, 113 min.)

The best that can be said for this drama is that it may prove of interest to intellectuals because of the story's "social consciousness," but as far as the picture-goer of the rank-and-file is concerned, the action is too slow for him, and the depressing story, drab settings, and unhappy ending, tend to make him feel morbid. Another drawback is that the Cockney accent of the players makes much of the dialogue unintelligible. The screen play, which is based on Richard Llewellyn's widely-read novel, is a loosely written affair that fails to make clear its purpose, which seems to be that the man in the street must take courage if we are to have a better world. No fault can be found with the performances. Cary Grant, as the shiftless Cockney, and Ethel Barrymore, as his hard-working mother, play their roles with distinction, and Barry Fitzgerald, seen briefly as Grant's philosophical friend, gives a good account of himself. The popularity of the players should, of course, help considerably, but it is not the sort of picture that will benefit from "word-of-mouth" recommendation:—

Grant, a shiftless young Cockney embittered with the sordid surroundings of London's East End, drifts idly and aimlessly through life. His shiftlessness disgusts Ethel Barrymore, his mother, owner of a small second-hand shop, causing many quarrels between them. Grant's ear for music arouses his interest in Jane Wyatt, a young cello player, but he does not return her deep love for him. Grant falls in love with Jane Duprez, cashier at a Fun Fair, arousing the jealousy of racketeer George Coulouris, his ex-husband, to whom she was inextricably bound. After an unusually bitter quarrel with his mother, Grant decides to leave home. But when Konstantin Shayne, a friendly pawnbroker, informs him that his mother was ill of cancer, Grant becomes reconciled with her and helps her to run the shop. Meanwhile June warns Grant to stay away from her lest Coulouris harm him. Grant tries to pick a quarrel with Coulouris only to have the crook offer him a well-paying job. Desperate and determined to ease his mother's last days, Grant accepts the offer. Grant turns on Coulouris, however, when his thugs molest the kindly pawnbroker. But, before he can have a showdown with the racketeer, Grant is arrested when the stolen car in which he was riding crashes. The pawnbroker bails him out of jail. Returning home, Grant finds that his mother, too, had been arrested, having been caught dealing in stolen goods. He visits her in the hospital jail, where he finds her dying. Later, he receives a note from June informing him that she had returned to Coulouris to protect him. These bitter setbacks make Grant realize that there is no hope for a better world unless the man in the street bestirs himself and fights for it. He realizes also the worth of Jane's love, and goes to her.

Clifford Odets wrote and directed the screen play, and David Hempstead produced it.

Adult entertainment.

"My Buddy" with Donald Barry
(Republic, Oct. 12; time, 69 min.)

Through a typographical error, the running time of this feature was given as 9 minutes in the review printed last week. The correct running time is 69 minutes.

**"Carolina Blues" with Kay Kyser,
Ann Miller and Victor Moore**
(Columbia, Sept. 26; time, 80 min.)

Just a moderately entertaining comedy with music, of program grade. Its chief assets are Ann Miller's dancing, Georgia Carroll's torch singing, and Kay Kyser's music. Its main appeal will, therefore, be directed to the younger set and to others who enjoy popular music. The story, however, is a thin and familiar one, offering little to hold one's interest. Here and there it has some good gags, but for the most part the players labor for laughs. A Harlem song and dance number is rather well done:—

Arriving in New York after an overseas tour, Kay Kyser promises the members of his band a two-weeks vacation. Kyser, however, is compelled to postpone the vacation plans when Jeff Donnell, his publicist, arranges for the band to perform at a war plant. Victor Moore, poor relation of the plant's owners, pretends wealth and uses his family ties to promote a job for Ann Miller, his daughter, as soloist with Kyser's band, to replace Georgia Carroll, who planned to marry and leave the troupe. Kyser declines to employ Ann, explaining that rich girls were generally unreliable. Meanwhile Howard Freeman, a fellow townsman of Kyser's, pleads with him to come to Rocky Mount, N. C., to stage a bond rally and raise enough money to build a cruiser named after the town. Kyser, lest the rally interfere with his band's vacation plans, compromises by staging the show in New York. With the money raised, Kyser allows the band to go on vacation, while he goes to Rocky Mount alone to receive the congratulations of the townspeople. Complications arise when the Government notifies Kyser that the money raised in New York could not be allocated to Rocky Mount. To stage another rally, Kyser feigns illness and summons the band members. All come to Rocky Mount in the belief that he was dying. Meanwhile Moore and Ann arrive, intending to tell Kyser the truth about themselves. Kyser patronizes them in the hope that Moore will buy enough bonds to reach the sum needed for a cruiser. Ann tells Kyser the truth about herself, and Moore, to insure the bond rally's success, blackmails his wealthy relatives into buying \$20,000,000 worth of bonds.

Joseph Kaufman and Al Martin wrote the screen play, Samuel Bischoff produced it, and Leigh Jason directed it. The cast includes Harold Nicholas, the Cristianis, the Four Step Brothers, the Layson Brothers and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Swing Hostess" with Martha Tilton
and Iris Adrian**
(PRC, Sept. 8; time, 76 min.)

A routine program comedy with music; it should serve its purpose as a supporting feature in its intended market. Martha Tilton has a pleasing voice, and some of the songs she sings are catchy tunes. The story is rather lightweight, but it is no worse than the stories used in the majority of program musicals turned out by the larger companies. Cliff Nazario, who resorts to "double talk," manages to provoke a few laughs, but there is little about the comedy that is amusing:—

Martha Tilton, an ambitious young singer, seeking employment with Charles Collins' orchestra, at-

tends an audition held by Collins. Through a misunderstanding, Collins fails to hear her voice. Needing work, Martha accepts a job changing records for a juke box concern, and, while on this job, becomes friendly with Collins but does not know his identity. A friend of Martha's gives her an opportunity to record her voice, but, before she can obtain the record, Harry Holman, owner of the recording company, arrives with Betty Brodel, in whom he was interested, to make a recording of her voice. When Holman plays the record, he hears Martha's voice and mistakes it for Betty's. Not realizing his error, Holman signs Betty to a contract. Collins, hearing the record played over the radio, is thrilled with the voice. He signs Betty to sing with his band at the opening of a new night-club. Holman, however, realizes his mistake when Betty makes another record. Since the friend who had arranged for Martha to record her voice could not be found, Holman institutes a nation-wide search to find the girl who made the record. A group of vaudevillians, who lived in Martha's boarding house, recognize her voice and determine that she should get credit. Through them, and the assistance of Iris Adrian, her close friend, Martha is credited for having made the record and is given an opportunity to sing with Collins' band on the night of the opening.

Louise Rousseau and Gail Davenport wrote the screen play. Sam Neufeld produced it, and Sam Newfield directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933, OF HARRISON'S REPORTS, published Weekly at New York, N. Y., for Oct. 1, 1944.

State of New York.

County of New York.

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Al Picoult, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Managing Editor of the HARRISON'S REPORTS and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager, are:

Publisher, *Harrison's Reports, Inc.*, 1270 6th Ave., New York, N. Y.
Editor, *P. S. Harrison*, 1270 6th Ave., New York, N. Y.
Managing Editor, *Al Picoult*, 1270 6th Ave., New York, N. Y.
Business Manager, *None*.

2. That the owner is: *Harrison's Reports, Inc.*, 1270 6th Ave., New York, N. Y.

P. S. Harrison, 1270 6th Ave., New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent, or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: *None*.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation, has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) AL PICOULT,
(Managing Editor).

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 2nd day of October, 1944.

JACK G. KARPE,
(My commission expires March 30, 1945.)

A VAIN HOPE

"Provided no burdensome restrictions are placed on American films by foreign governments," says Lou Pelegrine, staff writer of the *Film Daily* in the September 25 issue of that paper, "the future of the nation's film business abroad with the return of peace hinges on the ability of Hollywood producers to turn out entertainment pictures and avoid propaganda." Such is the opinion of distributors as gathered by Mr. Pelegrine.

I don't know what Mr. Pelegrine means by "avoid propaganda." To comprehend the meaning of this phrase clearly, one must assume that the American producers produced propaganda pictures before the war. But such does not seem to be the case. The future of the industry abroad, therefore, depends, in the opinion of "informed circles" in New York, on the producers' ability to make "entertainment pictures."

In view of the fact that the proportion of good to bad pictures has remained the same throughout the years of feature pictures, it is doubtful if the number of good pictures will be larger after the war. If anything, it will be smaller, for the reason that the cost of production is constantly increasing, and there is no hope that the present waste will be eliminated. Consequently, we must take as a basis the number of pictures that are likely to be produced, and the distributors' prayer that the foreign governments will not impose any restrictions on the American films.

Experience has shown us, however, that the foreign governments will put restrictions on our films, regardless of our prayers to the contrary. What, then, can be done to offset the restrictions that will be imposed on American pictures by the foreign governments?

As it has already been said in these columns, there is only one way, assuming that the Department of State will be impotent to prevent foreign government restrictions: To send abroad nothing but the best pictures so that the public will clamor for American pictures. When they see the native product and compare it with the product that is imported from America, they will patronize American pictures in increasing numbers until the day will come when the exhibitors of those countries will point out to the officials of their governments that it is useless for them to impose restrictions on the American films with the hope that the quality of the native product will improve.

To enable the producers to send abroad nothing but the best, they must appoint an impartial committee to do the choosing. But will they be able to suppress their company vanity for a long-range benefit? Personally I doubt it.

What is the reason for my doubts? Every industry in the United States has been buying space in the magazines and newspapers with the purpose of building up good will except the motion picture industry. Promptings from this medium and from other mediums have failed to arouse them, even though the cost will be virtually nothing to them. Each company will spend money to boost its own product, but when it comes to combining with the other companies for the purpose of conducting a campaign of good will for the entire industry they are unwilling to spend a dime. Their action on this important matter is what makes me doubt, as I have said, that, when it comes to dele-

gating their individual powers in the selecting of pictures that should be sent abroad, they will be unwilling to do it. And they will continue sending every picture that they make, thus giving a chance to the native product to displace the American product, a small percentage at first, but a great one as time goes on.

To those who hope that the foreign governments will forego placing restrictions upon the importation of American films, this paper says that they are hoping in vain.

RETAIN YOUR SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS

Under the heading, "Independent Exhibitor Resolution No. 1," Sidney E. Samuelson, indefatigable business manager of Allied Independent Theatre Owners of Eastern Pennsylvania, sounds a timely warning in a recent service bulletin of his organization. Says Samuelson:

"This is the season of the year when distributors announce their new product in glowing terms and make extravagant promises for the future.

"This is the season of the year when each and every independent exhibitor should resolve to retain his Saturdays and Sundays for himself. Go over your books—analyze your expenses and receipts—and you will be convinced that you must keep the good playing time for yourself if you are to make an adequate profit sufficient to repay you for your work, your investment and to provide for future remodeling and replacements.

"Fair film rentals could be profitable to both exhibitor and distributor. But one-sided deals that make the distributor your partner on the very profitable days and leave you holding the bag during the rest of the week should be avoided."

A RESOLUTION AGAINST RE-ISSUES PRICED THE SAME AS NEW PRODUCT

At its meeting held at Bretton Woods, N. H., on September 8, the Board of Directors of National Allied adopted the following resolution:

"WHEREAS the declared purpose of the distributors in selling re-issues was to relieve the existing film shortage and to make product available to the exhibitors at prices they could afford to pay; and

"WHEREAS the pictures so re-issued have long been written off on the books of the companies and the only cost properly chargeable against them are prints, distribution and advertising costs and royalties; and

"WHEREAS distributors now are demanding for re-issues prices which are far in advance of those charged for that class of product in recent years and which are comparable with the prices demanded for current releases; now therefore, be it

"RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors that they condemn the efforts of the distributors in attempting to exact for re-issues prices in excess of those charged for that class of pictures during the 1943-1944 season."

HARRISON'S REPORTS

Vol. XXVI

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RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR FEATURES

Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

5007	Mr. Winkle Goes To War—Edw. Robinson.	Aug. 3
5027	Cry of the Werewolf—Massen-Crane.....	Aug. 17
5026	Soul of a Monster—Hobart-Bates.....	Aug. 17
5012	Kansas City Kitty—Davis-Crosby-Frazee.....	Aug. 24
	Swing in the Saddle—Mus. Western (69m.)..	Aug. 31
5002	The Impatient Years—Arthur-Bowman.....	Sept. 7
5025	Ever Since Venus—Savage-Hunter.....	Sept. 14
5033	One Mysterious Night—Morris-Carter.....	Sept. 19
5011	Carolina Blues—Kyser-Miller	Sept. 26
5026	Strange Affair—Joslyn-Keyes	Oct. 5

(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

6201	Cowboy from Lonesome River—Starrett....	Sept. 21
	Meet Miss Bobby Socks—Crosby-Merrick....	Oct. 12
6021	Shadows in the Night—Baxter-Foch.....	Oct. 19
	The Unwritten Code—Neal-Savage.....	Oct. 26
	Mark of the Whistler—Dix-Carter.....	Nov. 2
	Sergeant Mike—Parks-Bates	Nov. 7
	Eve Knew Her Apples—Miller-Wright.....	Nov. 9

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 9

501	The Seventh Cross—Tracy-Gurie.....	September
502	Barbary Coast Gent—Beery.....	September
503	Waterloo Bridge—Taylor-Leigh (reissue)...	September
504	Maisie Goes to Reno—Sothorn-Hodiak....	September
505	Marriage is a Private Affair—Turner- Craig	October
506	Kismet—Dietrich-Colman	October
507	Mrs. Parkington—Pidgeon-Garson	November
508	Naughty Marietta—MacDonald-Eddy (reissue)	November
509	Lost in a Harem—Abbott & Costello.....	December
	Specials	
500	Dragon Seed—Hepburn-Huston	August
510	An American Romance—Donlevy.....	November

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

305	Are These Our Parents?—Neill-Vinson.....	July 15
323	Three of a Kind—Gilbert-Howard.....	July 22
356	West of the Rio Grande—J. M. Brown (59m.)..	Aug. 5
315	Call of the Jungle—Ann Corio.....	Aug. 19
325	Leave it to the Irish—Dunne-McKay.....	Aug. 26
367	The Utah Kid—Trail Blazers (53 m.).....	Aug. 26
306	Oh, What a Night—Lowe-Parker.....	Sept. 2
324	Black Magic—Sidney Toler.....	Sept. 9
313	Block Busters—East Side Kids.....	Sept. 16
357	Land of the Outlaws—J. M. Brown (60 m.)..	Sept. 30
358	Law of the Valley—J. M. Brown.....	Nov. 4

(End of 1943-44 Season)

(Continued on inside page)

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- 416 Shadow of Suspicion—Weaver-Cookson.....Sept. 23
 413 When Strangers Marry—Jagger-Hunter.....Oct. 7
 408 A Wave, A Wac & a Marine—Youngman....Oct. 7
 111 Enemy of Women—Drake-Andor.....Oct. 21
 Army Wives—Rambeau-Knox.....Nov. 4
 Alaska—Taylor-Lindsay.....Nov. 18
 The Jade Mask—Sidney Toler.....Nov. 25

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)
 (No national release dates)

Block 1

- 4401 Rainbow Island—Lamour-Bracken.....
 4402 Till We Meet Again—Milland-Britton.....
 4403 National Barn Dance—Quigley-Heather.....
 4404 Our Hearts Were Young and Gay—Lynn-Russell...
 4405 Dark Mountain—Lowery-Drew

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)
1943-44

- 466 Rustler's Hideout—Buster Crabbe No. 8
 (55 m.).....Sept. 12
 41PS When the Lights Go On Again—Lydon(re) . Nov. 23
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 505 Dixie Jamboree—Langford-Kibbee.....Aug. 15
 513 Castle of Crimes—English cast.....Aug. 25
 509 Swing Hostess—Tilton-Adrian.....Sept. 8
 551 Gangsters of the Frontier—Texas Rangers
 No. 1 (58 m.).....Sept. 21
 I Accuse My Parents—Hughes-Lowell.....Oct. 10
 Bluebeard—Carradine-Parker.....Oct. 15
 Wild Horse Phantom—Buster Crabbe No. 1..Oct. 28
 I'm From Arkansas—Summerville-Brendel...Oct. 31
 Dead or Alive—Texas Rangers No. 2.....Nov. 9
 The Town Went Wild—Lydon-Horton.....Nov. 15
 The Great Mike—Stuart Edwin.....Nov. 30

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)
1943-44

- 322 The Girl Who Dared—Gray-Cookson.....Aug. 5
 344 Song of Nevada—Roy Rogers (74 m.).....Aug. 5
 324 Port of 40 Thieves—Bachelor-Powers....Aug. 13
 3306 Ride, Ranger, Ride—Gene Autry (reissue). Sept. 1
 326 Strangers in the Night—Terry-Grey.....Sept. 12
 328 That's My Baby—Arlen-Drew.....Sept. 14
 345 San Fernando Valley—Roy Rogers (74 m.)..Sept. 15
 327 Atlantic City—Moore-Taylor.....Sept. 15
 3307 Git Along Little Doggies—Autry (reissue)...Oct. 15
 323 Storm Over Lisbon—Von Stroheim-Ralston-
 Arlen.....Oct. 16
 (More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 3311 Tucson Raiders—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.).....May 14
 3312 Marshal of Reno—Elliott-Blake (56 m.).....July 2
 461 Silver City Kid—Lane-Stewart (55 m.).....July 20
 451 Bordertown Trail—Burnette-Carson (56 m.) Aug. 11
 401 Sing, Neighbor, Sing—Taylor-Terry.....Aug. 12
 3313 San Antonio Kid—Elliott-Stirling (56 m.)..Aug. 16
 462 Stagecoach to Monterey—Lane-Stewart
 (55 m.).....Oct. 6
 403 My Buddy—Barry-Terry.....Oct. 12
 402 End of the Road—Norris-Abbott.....Nov. 10

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

- 501 None But the Lonely Heart—Grant-Barrymore.....
 502 The Master Race—Coulouris-Ridges.....
 503 Tall in the Saddle—Wayne-Raines.....
 504 Goin' to Town—Lum and Abner.....
 505 My Pal, Wolf—Moffett-Esmond.....
 Specials
 581 Casanova Brown—Cooper-Wright.....

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 1

- 501 Take It or Leave It—Phil Baker.....August
 502 Wing and a Prayer—Ameche-Andrews.....August

Block 2

- 503 Sweet and Lowdown—Goodman-Bari.....September
 504 Dangerous Journey—Travelogue.....September
 505 Greenwich Village—Ameche-Bendix.....September

Block 3

- 506 The Big Noise—Laurel & Hardy.....October
 507 In the Meantime, Darling—Crain-Latimore...October
 508 Irish Eyes Are Smiling—Woolley-Haymes....October
 Special
 530 Wilson—Knox-Fitzgerald.....Not set

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- The Hairy Ape—Bendix-Hayward.....June 16
 Forty Thieves—Hopalong Cassidy (60 m.).....June 23
 Sensations of 1945—Powell-O'Keefe.....June 30
 Summer Storm—Darnell-Sanders.....July 14
 Abroad with Two Yanks—Bendix-O'Keefe.....Aug. 4
 Since You Went Away—All-star cast.....Not set

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 9005 Gypsy Wildcat—Montez-Hall.....Sept. 1
 9022 Moonlight and Cactus—Andrews Sisters....Sept. 8
 The Merry Monahans—O'Connor-Ryan....Sept. 15
 9019 The Pearl of Death—Rathbone-Bruce.....Sept. 22
 San Diego, I Love You—Allbritton-Hall....Sept. 29
 9030 The Singing Sheriff—Crosby-McKenzie.....Oct. 6
 Babes on Swing Street—Ryan-Blyth.....Oct. 13
 The Climax—Foster-Karloff.....Oct. 20
 Bowery to Broadway—All Star.....Nov. 3
 Dead Man's Eyes—Chaney-Parker.....Nov. 10
 9081 Riders of the Sante Fe—Rod Cameron.....Nov. 10
 Reckless Age—Gloria Jean.....Nov. 17
 The Suspect—Laughton-Raines.....Nov. 24
 Murder in the Blue Room—McDonald-Cook..Dec. 1
 Hi' Beautiful—O'Driscoll-Beery, Jr.....Dec. 8
 My Gal Loves Music—Crosby-McDonald....Dec. 15
 The Fugitive—Jean-Curtis.....Dec. 22

Warner Brothers Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 401 Janie—Reynolds-Arnold-Harding.....Sept. 2
 402 Crime By Night—Cowan-Wyman.....Sept. 9
 403 Arsenic and Old Lace—Grant-Massey.....Sept. 23
 404 The Last Ride—Travis-Lang.....Oct. 7
 405 The Conspirators—Lamarr-Henreid.....Oct. 21

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE**Columbia—One Reel****Beginning of 1944-45 Season**

6701	Mutt 'n Bones—Fantasy (7 m.)	Aug. 25
6851	Screen Snapshots No. 1 (10 m.)	Aug. 25
6651	Community Sings No. 1 (9½ m.)	Aug. 25
6951	Kehoe's Marimba Band—Film-Vodvil (11 m.)	Sept. 1
6801	K-9-Kadets—Sports (10½ m.)	Sept. 8
6852	Screen Snapshots No. 2 (10 m.)	Sept. 22
6601	Porkuliar Piggy—Li'l Abner	Oct. 6
6652	Community Sings No. 2 (re)	Oct. 12
6802	Over the Jumps—Sports	Oct. 12
6853	Screen Snapshots No. 3 (10 m.)	Oct. 19
6952	The Rootin' Tootin' Band—Film-Vodvil	Oct. 20
6751	Be Patient, Patient—Fox & Crow	Oct. 27
6653	Community Sings No. 3	Nov. 10

Columbia—Two Reels**1943-44**

5144	Secret of the Palace—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Aug. 4
5145	Feast of the Beggars—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Aug. 11
5146	Double of Jeopardy—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Aug. 18
5147	The Slave Traders—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Aug. 25
5148	The Underground River—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Sept. 1
5149	The Faithful Wheel—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Sept. 8
5150	Mystery of the Mosque—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Sept. 15
5151	Hand of Vengeance—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Sept. 22
5152	Sword of Fate—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Sept. 29
5153	The Wizard's Story—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Oct. 6
5154	Triumph of Kasim—Desert Hawk (18 m.)	Oct. 13

*(End of 1943-44 Season)***Beginning of 1944-45 Season**

6425	Wedded Bliss—Billy Gilbert (17 m.)	Aug. 18
6426	Gold is Where You Lose it—Clyde (16½ m.)	Sept. 1
6401	Gents Without Cents—Stooges (19 m.)	Sept. 22
6421	Strife of the Party—Vera Vague (re)	Oct. 13
6427	Open Season for Saps—Howard	Oct. 27

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel**1943-44**

S-555	Movie Pests—Pete Smith (11 m.)	July 8
K-572	Grandpa Called it Art—Pass. Parade (10 m.)	July 15
W-537	The Bodyguard—Cartoon (7 m.)	July 22
T-521	Monumental Utah—Traveltalk (9 m.)	July 29
S-556	Sports Quiz—Pete Smith (11 m.)	Sept. 2
W-538	Bear Raid Warden—Cartoon (7 m.)	Sept. 9
S-557	Football Thrills of 1943—Pete Smith (8 m.)	Sept. 23
M-589	Nostradamus No. 4—Miniature (11 m.)	Sept. 30

*(More to come)***Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels****1943-44**

X-510	Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.)	Jan. 1
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*(More to come)***Paramount—One Reel****1943-44**

J3-6	Popular Science No. 6 (10 m.)	Aug. 4
E3-6	Puppet Love—Popeye (7 m.)	Aug. 11
D3-6	It's Nifty to be Thrifty—Little Lulu (8 m.)	Aug. 18
R3-10	Furlough Fishing—Sportlight (9 m.)	Aug. 25
E3-7	Pitching Woo at the Zoo—Popeye	Sept. 1
L3-6	Unusual Occupations No. 6	Sept. 1
D3-7	I'm just Curious—Little Lulu	Sept. 8
Y3-6	Monkey Business—Speak. of Animals (9 m.)	Sept. 15
E3-8	Moving Aweigh—Popeye	Sept. 22
D3-8	Indoor Outing—Little Lulu	Sept. 29

*(End of 1943-44 Season)***Beginning of 1944-45 Season**

R4-1	Rhythm on Wheels—Sportlight (10 m.)	Oct. 6
U4-1	Jasper's Paradise—Puppetoon (9 m.)	Oct. 13
J4-1	Popular Science No. 1 (10 m.)	Oct. 20
P4-1	Yankee Doodle Donkey—Noveltoon	Oct. 27
R4-2	Bronco and Brands—Sportlight	Nov. 3
L4-1	Unusual Occupations No. 1	Nov. 10
D4-1	Birthday Party—Little Lulu	Nov. 17
Y4-1	As Babies—Speak. of Animals	Nov. 24
U4-2	Two Gun Rusty—Puppetoon	Dec. 1
E4-1	Shape Ahoy—Popeye	Dec. 8
R4-3	Picking the Favorites—Sportlight	Dec. 8
P4-2	Gabriel Churchkitten—Noveltoon	Dec. 15
J4-2	Popular Science No. 2	Dec. 22
D4-2	Beau Ties—Little Lulu	Dec. 29

Paramount—Two Reels**1943-44**

FF3-6	Halfway to Heaven—Mus. Parade (19 m.)	Aug. 25
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*(End of 1943-44 Season)***Beginning of 1944-45 Season**

FF4-1	Bonnie Lassie—Musical Parade (19 m.)	Oct. 6
FF4-2	Star Bright—Musical Parade	Dec. 15

Republic—Two Reels

384	Haunted Harbor—Kay Aldrich (15 episodes) (reset)	Aug. 26
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RKO—One Reel**1943-44**

44312	Ski Chase—Sportscope (8 m.)	July 14
44313	Swim Ballet—Sportscope (8 m.)	Aug. 11

*(End of 1943-44 Season)***Beginning of 1944-45 Season**

54101	Springtime for Pluto—Disney (7 m.)	June 23
54102	The Plastic Inventor—Disney (7 m.) (re)	June 23
54301	Harness Racers—Sportscope (8½ m.)	Sept. 8
54201	Flicker Flashbacks No. 1	Sept. 15
54104	How to Play Football—Disney (7 m.)	Sept. 15
54103	First Aiders—Disney (7 m.)	Sept. 22

RKO—Two Reels**1943-44**

43110	Rockefeller Center—This is America (17 m.)	July 28
43111	Brazil Today—This is Amer. (17½ m.)	Aug. 25
43112	Mare Island—This is America	Sept. 22

*(More to come)***Beginning of 1944-45 Season**

53701	Triple Trouble—Leon Errol (16 m.)	Sept. 1
53201	Songs of the Colleges—Headliners (15 m.)	Sept. 8
53401	Go Feather Your Nest—Edgar Kennedy	Sept. 22

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

5251	Mexican Majesty—Adventure (9 m.)	Aug. 4
5501	The Cat Came Back—Terrytoon (6 m.)	Aug. 18
5252	Jewels of Iran—Adventure (8 m.)	Aug. 25
5502	The Two Barbers—Terrytoon (6 m.)	Sept. 1
5351	Blue Grass Gentleman—Sports (9 m.)	Sept. 15
5503	Ghost Town—Terrytoon (6½ m.)	Sept. 22
5253	Mystic India—Adventure (8 m.)	Sept. 29
5504	Sultan's Birthday—Terrytoon (6½ m.)	Oct. 13
5505	A Wolf's Tale—Terrytoon	Oct. 27
5254	Black, Gold and Cactus—Adventure	Nov. 10
5506	Mighty Mouse at the Circus—Terrytoon	Nov. 17
5255	City of Paradox—Adventure	Nov. 24
5507	Gandy's Dream Girl—Terrytoon	Dec. 8
5352	Trolling for Strikes—Sports	Dec. 15
5508	Dear Old Switzerland—Terrytoon	Dec. 22

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels**1943-44**

Vol. 10 No. 13—British Imperialism—
March of Time (18 m.) Aug. 11
(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

Vol. 11 No. 1—Post-War Farms—March of Time
(17 m.) Sept. 8
5601 Three Sisters of the Moors—Special (20 m.) . Sept. 8

Universal—One Reel**1943-44**

8381 Spinning a Yarn—Per. Odd. (9 m.) Aug. 7
8361 Bear Mountain Game—Var. Views (9 m.) . Aug. 14
(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

9231 Abou Ben Boogie—Swing Symphonies (7m) . Sept. 18
9371 Idol of the Crowd—Per. Odd. (9 m.) Sept. 18
9351 From Spruce to Bomber—Var. Views (9 m.) . Sept. 25
9232 The Beach Nut—Cartune (7 m.) Oct. 16

Universal—Two Reels**1943-44**

8131 Midnight Melodies—Musical (15 m.) July 19
(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

9781 Murder by Accident—Raiders of Ghost City
No. 1 (17 m.) July 25
9782 Flaming Treachery—Raiders No. 2 (17 m.) . Aug. 1
9783 Death Rides Double—Raiders No. 3 (17m) . Aug. 8
9784 Ghost City Terror—Raiders No. 4 (17 m.) . Aug. 15
9785 The Fatal Lariat—Raiders No. 5 (17 m.) . Aug. 22
9786 Water Rising—Raiders No. 6 (17 m.) Aug. 29
9787 Bullet Avalanche—Raiders No. 7 (17 m.) . Sept. 5
9788 Death Laughs Last—Raiders No. 8 (17 m.) . Sept. 12
9789 Cold Steel—Raiders No. 9 (17 m.) Sept. 19
9121 Swingtime Holiday—Musical (15 m.) Sept. 20
9790 Showdown—Raiders No. 10 (17 m.) Sept. 26
9791 The Trail to Torture—Raiders No. 11 (17m) . Oct. 3
9792 Calling all Buckboards—Raiders No. 12
(17 m.) Oct. 10
9793 Golden Vengeance—Raiders No. 13 (17 m.) . Oct. 17
9681 The Tragic Crash—Mystery of the River Boat
No. 1 (17 m.) Oct. 24
9682 The Phantom Killer—River Boat No. 2
(17 m.) Oct. 31
9683 The Flaming Inferno—River Boat No. 3
(17 m.) Nov. 7
9684 The Brink of Doom—River Boat No. 4
(17 m.) Nov. 14
9685 The Highway of Peril—River Boat No. 5
(17 m.) Nov. 21
9686 The Fatal Plunge—River Boat No. 6
(17 m.) Nov. 28

Vitaphone—One Reel**1943-44**

9610 All Star Melody Master—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) . July 29
9513 Blue Nose Schooner—Sports (10 m.) Aug. 5
9714 From Hand to Mouse—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) .. Aug. 5
9313 Isle of Pingo Pongo—Mer. Mel. (reissue)
(7 m.) Aug. 19
9713 Birdy and the Beast—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Aug. 19
9725 Buckaroo Bugs—Bugs Bunny (7 m.) Aug. 26
9715 Goldilocks Jivin' Bears—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) . Sept. 2
9712 Plane Daffy—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Sept. 16
9716 Lost and Foundling—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) ... Sept. 30
9717 Booby Hatched—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Oct. 14
9726 The Old Gray Hare—Bugs Bunny (7 m.) ... Oct. 28
9512 Champions of the Future—Sports (7m) (re) . Nov. 4
9718 Stupid Cupid—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Nov. 11
9719 Stage Door Cartoon—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Nov. 18
9720 Odor-able Kitty—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) Dec. 2
(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

1401 Their Dizzy Day—Varieties (10 m.) Sept. 2
1601 Bob Wills & Texas Playboys—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.) Sept. 2
1301 Let it be Me—Hit Parade (7 m.) Sept. 16
1302 September in the Rain—Hit Par. (7 m.) ... Sept. 30
1402 Ski Whizz—Varieties (10 m.) Oct. 7
1602 Listen to the Bands—Mel. Mas. (10 m.) ... Oct. 7
1303 Sunday Got to Meeting Time—Hit Par. (7m) . Oct. 28
1603 Harry Owen's Royal Hawaiians—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.) Nov. 4
1501 California Here We Are—Sports (10 m.) .. Nov. 18

Vitaphone—Two Reels**1943-44**

9106 U. S. Marines on Review—Featurette
(20 m.) July 8
9004 Devil Boats—Special (20 m.) Aug. 12
9006 Musical Movieland—Special (20 m.) Sept. 9
(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

1102 Proudly We Serve—Featurette (20 m.) Sept. 23
1103 Once Over Lightly—Featurette (20 m.) Oct. 14
1001 Let's Go Fishing—Special (20 m.) Oct. 21
1002 Beachhead to Berlin—Special (20 m.) Nov. 25

**NEWSWEEKLY
NEW YORK
RELEASE DATES**

Pathe News

55212 Wed. (E) .. Oct. 4
55113 Sat. (O) ... Oct. 7
55214 Wed. (E) .. Oct. 11
55115 Sat. (O) ... Oct. 14
55216 Wed. (E) .. Oct. 18
55117 Sat. (O) ... Oct. 21
55218 Wed. (E) .. Oct. 25
55119 Sat. (O) ... Oct. 28
55220 Wed. (E) .. Nov. 1
55121 Sat. (O) ... Nov. 4
55222 Wed. (E) .. Nov. 8
55123 Sat. (O) ... Nov. 11
55224 Wed. (E) .. Nov. 15
55125 Sat. (O) ... Nov. 18

Fox Movietone

9 Tues. (O) Oct. 3
10 Thurs. (E) Oct. 5
11 Tues. (O) Oct. 10
12 Thurs. (E) Oct. 12
13 Tues. (O) Oct. 17
14 Thurs. (E) Oct. 19
15 Tues. (O) Oct. 24
16 Thurs. (E) Oct. 26
17 Tues. (O) Oct. 31
18 Thurs. (E) Nov. 2
19 Tues. (O) Nov. 7
20 Thurs. (E) Nov. 9
21 Tues. (O) Nov. 14
22 Thurs. (E) Nov. 16

Paramount News

10 Thurs. (E) Oct. 5
11 Sunday (O) ... Oct. 8
12 Thurs. (E) Oct. 12
13 Sunday (O) ... Oct. 15
14 Thurs. (E) Oct. 19
15 Sunday (O) ... Oct. 22
16 Thurs. (E) Oct. 26
17 Sunday (O) ... Oct. 29
18 Thurs. (E) Nov. 2
19 Sunday (O) ... Nov. 5
20 Thurs. (E) Nov. 9
21 Sunday (O) ... Nov. 12
22 Thurs. (E) Nov. 16
23 Sunday (O) ... Nov. 19

Metrotone News

207 Tues. (O) Oct. 3
208 Thurs. (E) ... Oct. 5
209 Tues. (O) Oct. 10
210 Thurs. (E) ... Oct. 12
211 Tues. (O) Oct. 17
212 Thurs. (E) ... Oct. 19
213 Tues. (O) Oct. 24
214 Thurs. (E) ... Oct. 26
215 Tues. (O) Oct. 31
216 Thurs. (E) ... Nov. 2
217 Tues. (O) ... Nov. 7
218 Thurs. (E) ... Nov. 9
219 Tues. (O) ... Nov. 14
220 Thurs. (E) ... Nov. 16

Universal

333 Wed. (O) Oct. 4
334 Fri. (E) Oct. 6
335 Wed. (O) Oct. 11
336 Fri. (E) Oct. 13
337 Wed. (O) Oct. 18
338 Fri. (E) Oct. 20
339 Wed. (O) Oct. 25
340 Fri. (E) Oct. 27
341 Wed. (O) ... Nov. 1
342 Fri. (E) ... Nov. 3
343 Wed. (O) ... Nov. 8
344 Fri. (E) ... Nov. 10
345 Wed. (O) ... Nov. 15
346 Fri. (E) ... Nov. 17

All American News

102 Friday Oct. 6
103 Friday Oct. 13
104 Friday Oct. 20
105 Friday Oct. 27
106 Friday Nov. 3
107 Friday Nov. 10
108 Friday Nov. 17

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Columns, if It is to Benefit the Exhibitor.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1944

No. 42

ADMISSION TAXES BECOMING A PROBLEM AGAIN

Commenting upon the fact that the Federal tax collections on admission prices for the month of July reached the "astronomical total of \$34,168,118," which is more than double the amount collected for any one month under the old ten per cent tax rate, when a high point of \$16,178,306 was reached, Will Sheridan, Washington correspondent of *The Independent*, points out in the September 30 issue of that paper that the current figures "make it pretty obvious that all the worry about what would happen to business if the tax went up was quite premature—likewise the price rises at the boxoffice haven't hurt attendance." Mr. Sheridan adds that "this, of course, does not mean that the industry should sit back and let the 20 per cent tax stay on after the war—if a depression comes that tax rate will be a deterrent."

Mr. Sheridan strikes a hopeful note by stating that, while "chatting around capitol hill," he got the impression that Congress will not be too difficult to convince, and that "many solons will be glad to put their weight behind tax slicing plans." Elsewhere in the bright picture painted by Mr. Sheridan, he states that several Congressmen even talked of doing away with admission levies, but he labels that "Utopian thinking," and says that there is a good chance that the tax might be dropped to less than ten per cent. Lest anyone reading his comments be misled, Mr. Sheridan is careful to point out that a tax-reduction movement is "definitely a post-war project—one for perhaps a year or two after the war."

Mr. Sheridan's remarks about the post-war tax situation are indeed encouraging, but it seems to me that he himself is indulging in what he so aptly terms "Utopian thinking" when he says that Congress will not be too difficult to convince. It is quite probable that Congress will be all the more difficult to convince because the last tax rise did not hurt theatre attendance, but, on the contrary, it brought in more revenue than had been estimated. True, such a condition was brought about by the abnormal spending ability of the public, but it will take some tall convincing to make the tax experts see the light.

But even more important than what will occur in the post-war years is the tax problem facing the industry at the present time. Most of you will recall that, during the tax hearings held earlier this year, the Treasury Department waged a determined fight for an admission tax rate of thirty per cent. Although the Department failed to attain its objective then, it seems as if it has every intention to attain it for the coming tax year.

The Treasury Department's intentions reveal themselves in an analysis it issued recently showing the comparative admission tax rates in this country and in the United Kingdom. According to this analysis, the English admission taxes range as high as two to five times the amount imposed in this country. For example, the Department sets the average admission price in this country at approximately 32 cents, on which the Federal tax is 6 cents, but in England, a comparable admission price would have a tax of 21½ cents. On certain admission levels, namely, 50 cents and 83½ cents, the tax rate in the United Kingdom would be 100%. *Motion Picture Daily* reports that, according to information available in some Washington quarters, the average admission price in England is in the 10½-pence to one-shilling bracket, or from 17½ to 21 cents, on which the tax is 14 cents; this makes the rate as high as 67 to 80 per cent.

In compiling and issuing its comparative analysis, the Treasury Department is, in the opinion of HARRISON'S REPORTS, laying the groundwork for a continuation of its admission-tax fight for at least thirty per cent—and perhaps more.

Exhibitor organizations should begin now to gather the information that will be required to resist any attempt to burden theatres with discriminatory taxation. Unless adequate preparations are made now, many exhibitors may find themselves in the same position that thousands of night-club and cabaret owners were in when the 30 per cent tax imposed on them affected their operations adversely. It was only after many of these owners were forced out of business by lack of patronage that the Government reduced the tax to 20 per cent. But by that time the damage had been done.

Let us not wait until a similar damage strikes the motion picture industry. Theatre owners should take steps to prevent it before it comes. And the only way to do it is to prepare now.

V-DAY AND YOUR INSURANCE POLICY

In a speech to the Kansas-Missouri Theatre Association, at its recent annual convention, Mr. Finton H. Jones, of the Travelers Insurance Company, indicated that, if an exhibitor elected to remain open on V-Day, the insurance companies would protect him against property damages caused by vandalism, provided his insurance policy has a vandalism clause. He added that an exhibitor without a vandalism clause in his policy would also be protected if he closed down on V-Day, for it will be assumed that he tried to protect his property.

This information should be taken into consideration in determining whether or not you should remain open on V-Day.

"Bluebeard" with John Carradine, Nils Asther and Jean Parker

(PRC, Oct. 15; time, 73 min.)

An interest-holding program murder melodrama. The story, which is logically developed, takes place in Paris in 1885, and it revolves around a maniacal French artist, who terrorizes the populace by a series of hideous murders. Since the audience knows from the beginning who the murderer is, the interest lies in the methods employed by the police to catch him, and in the care taken by the artist to escape detection. The atmosphere is rather grim, with no comedy to relieve the tension. The direction and the acting are very able, with the performance of John Carradine, as the artist, outstanding. The production values are way above the average PRC level:—

Carradine, who operated a puppet show as a hobby, falls in love with Jean Parker, a young dressmaker. Unknown to Jean, Carradine was the vicious strangler, whose identity the police sought to learn. The only person who knew of Carradine's maniacal murders was Ludwig Stossel, an unscrupulous art dealer, who sold Carradine's paintings, all of which were signed "Albert Garron." Inspector Nils Asther, of the Surcte, discovers a painting of a girl who was one of the strangler's victims, and traces it to Stossel's gallery. Stossel slyly professes ignorance of the painter's identity. Teala Loring, Jean's sister, who was a secret operative of the Surcte, poses as a girl of wealth and offers Stossel a huge commission if he could get "Garron" to paint her portrait. Unable to resist the lucrative fee, Stossel, by threats, induces Carradine to take on the work. Teala, recognizing Carradine as the man who was courting her sister, becomes panicky and accuses him of being the strangler. Enraged, Carradine strangles her with his cravat, one that Jean had mended for him. The cravat is found near the body and recognized by Jean, who visits Carradine and bluntly accuses him of the murder. Carradine pleads with Jean to understand him, explaining that, as a youth, he had fallen in love with a model, whom he idolized as a Saint only to discover that she was a woman of loose morals. As a result, he had embarked on his maniacal career. In her (Jean), he had found a new love, and he had to kill Teala lest she interfere with their happiness. When Jean rejects his pleas, Carradine attempts to strangle her, but she is saved by the timely arrival of the police. In a chase over the Paris rooftops, Carradine plunges to his death.

Pierre Gendron wrote the screen play, Leon Fromkess produced it, and Edgar Ulmer directed it. Martin Mooney was associate producer.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Princess and the Pirate" with Bob Hope and Virginia Mayo

(RKO, no release date set; time, 94 min.)

Highly entertaining. There is no doubt as to the picture's drawing power because of Bob Hope's great popularity. It is a very lavish production, photographed in Technicolor, in which Hope is cast as an eighteenth century vaudeville comedian, an admitted coward, who, to save his own neck, helps rescue a princess from a gang of cut-throat pirates. The story is a completely nonsensical farce that does not pretend to be more than that, and one is kept in a constant state of laughter because of Hope's hilarious gags and antics. The finish, where Bing Crosby makes an unexpected appearance as a lowly commoner and wins the princess, is extremely comical. Walter Brennan, as a half-witted pirate, and Victor McLaglen, as the pirate leader, add much to the entertainment values. The action is fast-moving throughout:—

Bound for Jamaica aboard the packet, Mary Ann, Hope meets Virginia Mayo, who was running away from the King, her father, to avoid an undesirable marriage. A band of pirates led by Victor McLaglen board the ship and abduct Virginia for ransom. Hope, disguised as a toothless old

gypsy, is taken along. Walter Brennan, one of the pirates, offers to help Hope escape if he would deliver to his brother on a distant island a treasure map stolen from McLaglen. Hope and Virginia escape to the island, but they fail to find Brennan's brother. To get money for food, they obtain jobs as entertainers in a tough cafe. There, Virginia is recognized by Walter Slezak, governor of the island, who kidnaps and imprisons her in his castle. When Hope tries to rescue her, he, too, is imprisoned. McLaglen and his buccaneers arrive on the island determined to find the holder of the stolen map. Brennan, lest Hope destroy the map, knocks him unconscious and tattoos it on his chest. Meanwhile McLaglen, learning that Hope had masqueraded as the old gypsy, deduces that he had stolen the map, and that he was in league with the Governor to steal his buried treasure. He orders his men to attack the castle. Brennan knocks out McLaglen and prevails upon Hope to disguise himself in the pirate chief's clothes and take command of the cut-throats. The pirates follow Hope's leadership, but he is soon discovered and sentenced to die. Hope is saved, however, by the timely arrival of one of the King's ships. The pirates are subdued, and the King promises to let Virginia marry whom she will. Hope prepares to embrace her, but Virginia walks by him and throws her arm around one of the King's sailors—Bing Crosby.

Don Hartman, Melville Shavelson, and Everett Freeman wrote the screen play, Samuel Goldwyn produced it, and David Butler directed it. Mr. Hartman was associate producer. The cast includes Marc Lawrence, Hugo Haas and others.

Suitable for all.

"Shadow of Suspicion" with Marjorie Weaver and Peter Cookson

(Monogram, Sept. 23; time, 68 min.)

A fairly good program crook melodrama. It should go over with audiences who are not too concerned about the lack of logic in a plot as long as it is fast-moving and has exciting action. In addition to the melodrama, the story offers considerable comedy and a mildly pleasant romance. Despite the plot's implausibility, one's attention is held pretty well, particularly in the first half, because of the manner in which the hero casts suspicion upon himself in order to trap the real criminal. Most of the excitement occurs in the second half, when the heroine unwittingly becomes involved with the crooks:—

Peter Cookson and Tim Ryan, private investigators, are sent to the Chicago branch of a prominent jewelry firm to solve a series of thefts. Suspicious of Pierre Watkin, the branch manager, Cookson deliberately makes it appear as if he himself is a crook in order to lure Watkin into a trap. Ryan, to further the ruse, feigns cooperation with Watkin to trap Cookson. Meanwhile Watkin, in league with a gang of jewel thieves, plans to steal a valuable necklace and to pin the blame on Cookson. He hides the necklace in a pair of bronzed baby shoes, which he entrusts to Marjorie Weaver, his unsuspecting secretary, to deliver to his "mother" in New York. Cookson, aware of Watkin's plans, removes the necklace before the package is taken by Marjorie. He boards the same train to New York, intending to protect Marjorie and to follow her to the gang's hideout. En route, Cookson is forcibly removed from the train by two of Watkin's henchmen, who feared that he might steal the necklace from Marjorie. Reaching New York, Marjorie goes to Watkin's "mother," actually the head of the gang, who threatens her when she discovers the necklace missing. Meanwhile Cookson escapes from the henchmen and trails Marjorie to the gang's headquarters. There, he pretends to make a deal with the gang, allowing Ryan and the police enough time to arrive and capture the crooks.

Albert DeMond and Earle Snell wrote the screen play, A. W. Hackel produced it, and William Beaudine directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Conspirators" with Paul Henreid and Hedy Lamarr

(Warner Bros., Oct. 21; time, 102 min.)

This melodrama, revolving around espionage activities in a neutral country, is fairly interesting, but it is doubtful if the masses will enjoy it, because of the heavy atmosphere and its lack of comedy relief. Moreover, the action is slow, and except for a prison break, and for the closing scenes, where the hero pursues and kills a traitor, there is little excitement. War-time Lisbon serves as the locale, giving the picture an interesting international background, but the story, though it has occasional moments of suspense, is somewhat muddled and lacks conviction; it is too stogy. The picture can boast of good performances by the entire cast, and of a fine production, but these are not enough to maintain one's interest in the proceedings:—

Arriving in Lisbon to contact a group of confederates, Paul Henreid, a Dutch underground agent, is directed to a cafe where he receives instructions from Peter Lorre, a fellow-conspirator. At the cafe, Henreid meets Hedy Lamarr, a mysterious woman, who rushes in and seats herself at his table to escape the police. Understanding her predicament, Henreid does not question her. But when she disappears from the cafe on a pretense, he follows her to a gambling club. She pleads with him to forget her. On the following day, Henreid meets Sydney Greenstreet, head of the Dutch conspirators, who arranges for him to accompany another agent on a mission that night. In the meantime, Henreid contacts Hedy and induces her to spend the day with him. Both fall deeply in love, despite her admission that she was married to Victor Francen, a member of the German Legation. Henreid returns to his hotel room to meet the agent only to find the man murdered. At that moment, the police arrive and arrest him for the killing. Believing that he had been the victim of a Nazi plot engineered by Hedy, Henreid escapes from prison and joins Greenstreet. He learns that both Hedy and her husband were members of their group. Greenstreet announces that the murder might have been committed by a traitor among their own group. Unknown to the others, Greenstreet and Henreid set a trap to catch the traitor. Francen reveals himself as the guilty person. He escapes, closely pursued by Henreid, who shoots him down. In his pocket, the police find evidence clearing Henreid of the co-agent's murder. Henreid leaves to perform a mission, promising Hedy that he will return.

Vladimir Pozner and Leo Rosten wrote the screen play, Jack Chertok produced it, and Jean Negulesco directed it. The cast includes Joseph Calleia, Carol Thurston, Vladimir Sokoloff, Edward Ciannelli, Steve Geray and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Strange Affair" with Allyn Joslyn, Evelyn Keyes and Marguerite Chapman

(Columbia, Oct. 5; time, 78 min.)

This sequel to "Dangerous Blondes" is only moderately amusing program fare. It is a murder-mystery melodrama, with the accent on the comedy, in which Allyn Joslyn and Evelyn Keyes enact again the roles of a young married couple who set out to solve a murder. The chief fault with the picture is the excessive talk; not only does it slow up the action, but if one should miss two minutes of the dialogue, he would not understand what the story is all about. Here and there it has a few amusing situations, but for the most part the comedy is dull, with slapstick often resorted to for laughs:—

Joslyn and Evelyn are present at a dinner sponsored by Dr. Erwin Kaiser to raise funds for refugees when Dr. Ivan Triesault, physician at a nearby internment camp, collapses at the table, dead. Police Lieutenant Edgar Buchanan declares that the man had died of heart failure, but Joslyn, an amateur detective, deduces that it was murder. When an autopsy reveals that the doctor had been poisoned, every

one present becomes a suspect. They include Dr. Kaiser; Nina Foch, his daughter; Tonio Selwart, an artist; Marguerite Chapman, a mysterious woman; and Hugo Hass, a refugee, who was the doorman at Joslyn's apartment hotel. With the skeptical assistance of his wife, Joslyn manages to uncover suspicious evidence against each of the suspects. He discovers that Marguerite was the dead man's widow, and that Selwart was her lover. When Dr. Kaiser disappears with \$200,000 that had been entrusted to him by the dead man, the police believe the doctor guilty. Joslyn, however, rejects their theory and continues to investigate. He tracks down a number of clues only to find himself trapped by a gang of Nazi agents. They had murdered Triesault because he had learned of their plan, and had kidnapped Dr. Kaiser to divert suspicion from themselves. Haas, the doorman, reveals himself as the head of the gang. Meanwhile Evelyn had picked up Joslyn's trail and, after a series of misadventures with the police, arrives with them in time to rescue Joslyn and round up the Nazis.

Oscar Saul, Eve Greene, and Jerome Odlum wrote the screen play, Burt Kelly produced it, and Alfred E. Green directed it. The cast includes Frank Jenks, Erik Rolf, Shemp Howard and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Great Mike" with Stuart Erwin and Robert Henry

(PRC, Nov. 30; time, 71 min.)

A thoroughly pleasant program entertainment, suitable for the entire family. There is deep human interest in many of the situations, awakened by the love of a young boy for his horse and his dog, and by the kindness of his adult friends, who understand his feelings and come to his aid. Robert Henry, the eleven-year-old boy, steals the picture with his excellent performance, winning the spectator's sympathy by his display of fine traits. The story presents nothing novel, but it has been given a good treatment. It has two very exciting horse races:—

Carefully saving his earnings from the sale of newspapers, young Robert Henry hopes one day to own Mike, a thoroughbred horse, which had been entrusted to him by his uncle. The boy dreamed of entering the horse at the Santa Anita race track to win enough money to build his newsboy chums a club house. Robert meets Colonel Pierre Watkins, a famous Kentucky horse-breeder, and Stuart Erwin, his trainer, while delivering newspapers to them. Both men are amazed at the boy's knowledge of horses, and the Colonel sportingly accepts the boy's challenge to race Mike against one of his horses. Mike loses the race, but the two men are impressed with his running. Robert is saddened when word comes that his uncle had sold Mike to Marion Martin, a movie star. Mike, brooding for the companionship of Robert and of Corky, the youngster's dog, refuses to eat or run at the new stables. Miss Martin, annoyed, offers to sell Mike back to the boy. The youngster offers Erwin a half-interest in the horse if he would put up the money. Erwin accepts and begins training Mike. The horse wins his first race, much to the chagrin of a gambling ring, who had considered him a rank outsider. To prevent Mike from winning a second time, the gamblers try to dope the horse on the eve of the race. Corky scares off the culprits, who kill him for interfering. Mike broods over the death of his little friend, and refuses to run. Robert, however, obtains another dog, Corky's brother, and the horse becomes his old self. The Colonel permits Robert and Erwin to enter Mike in a big race against his own horse, and gracefully accepts defeat when Mike romps home a winner at tremendous odds.

Raymond L. Schrock wrote the screen play, Leon Fromkess produced it, and Wallace W. Fox directed it. Martin Mooney was associate producer. The cast includes Carl (Alfalfa) Switzer, Gwen Kenyon and others.

**"To Have and Have Not" with
Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall**
(Warner Bros., Jan. 21; time, 100 min.)

Good. Fashioned along the lines of "Casablanca," this melodrama has pretty good box-office possibilities because of Humphrey Bogart's popularity. The story, which is set against the Vichy collaborationist background of Martinique, prior to its capitulation to the Allies, is a diffused mixture of international political intrigue, virile action, and romance, obviously tailored to fit the well known "tough guy" talents of Bogart. As such, it will undoubtedly please his fans. The surprise of the picture is Lauren Bacall, a newcomer, who makes quite an impression as a woman of loose morals, with whom Bogart falls in love. As a matter of fact, her actions are so brazenly suggestive that they make the picture unsuitable for children. Although the story is rather inadequate, the characterizations are highly interesting:—

Bogart, an American, makes his living on Martinique by hiring out his fast cabin cruiser to fishermen. He is approached by Marcel Dalio, his hotel keeper, who asks him to undertake a dangerous mission for a group of De Gaullists. Bogart refuses to become involved in the island's politics. While dining with Walter Sande, a client, and Lauren Bacall, an American girl stranded on the island, Bogart is caught in a Vichy police raid, aimed at capturing the De Gaullists. Sande is killed by a stray bullet, and Lauren and Bogart are questioned by Captain Dan Seymour, head of the Vichy police. Aroused when Lauren is slapped, Bogart determines to send her back to the States. He agrees to go on the mission for the De Gaullists, and spends the money to buy a plane ticket for Lauren. Accompanied by Walter Brennan, a drunken derelict, whom he had befriended, Bogart goes to a nearby islet where he picks up Walter Molnar, a leading De Gaullist, and his wife, Dolores Moran. On the way back, Bogart has a brush with a Vichy patrol boat, during which Molnar is wounded. Returning to the hotel, Bogart finds that Lauren had not used the plane ticket, electing to remain with him. The police, aware that Bogart's boat had been used to smuggle in Molnar, arrest Brennan in the hope that he will reveal Molnar's whereabouts. Roused by the Vichyites insidious methods, Bogart traps Seymour and his lieutenants when they come to his room to question him. He subdues Seymour and forces him to telephone for the release of Brennan. Leaving Seymour in the hands of the local Free French, Bogart picks up Molnar and his wife, and together with Brennan and Lauren, departs from Martinique in his little craft.

Jules Furthman and William Faulkner wrote the screen play from the novel by Ernest Hemingway, and Howard Hawks produced and directed it. The cast includes Hoagy Carmichael, Sheldon Leonard and others.

**"The Woman in the Window" with
Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett
and Raymond Massey**
(RKO, no release date set; time, 99 min.)

This second of International Pictures' four productions to be released through RKO is a superior murder thriller, well directed and expertly acted by a capable cast. The story is not a mystery, yet it grip's one's attention from the opening to the closing scenes. Suspense is sustained all the way through because of the danger to Edward G. Robinson, shown as a mild-mannered college professor, who tries to cover up a murder he had committed in self defense. Some of the situations, particularly those in which Robinson has narrow brushes with the law, will make your patrons gasp. To most people, the ending, which reveals that Robinson's terrifying experiences had been a dream, will come as a surprise. For this reason, exhibitors should urge their patrons to see the picture from the beginning:—

Robinson, whose family was on vacation, dines at his club with two close friends, Raymond Massey, a district attorney, and Edmund Breon, a physician. After a discussion of how easily one can become involved in a criminal action, Robinson's friends leave him. He settles down to

read a book and asks the steward to call him at ten-thirty. Leaving the club, Robinson stops to admire a portrait of a beautiful woman in an art gallery window, and is surprised no end to find the model, Joan Bennett, standing beside him. He accepts her invitation to go to her apartment to see other sketches of herself. As they have a quiet drink, Arthur Loft, a prominent financier, bursts into the apartment and jealously attacks Robinson, who stabs him in self defense. Learning from Joan that Loft had visited her secretly for years, and convinced that there was nothing to link the dead man with either Joan or himself, Robinson connives with her to dispose of the body and to keep the killing a secret between them. The body is found in a thicket on the following day, and the police begin a search for the killer. Robinson keeps in touch with the developments through Massey, who tells him of the clues that had been found. Complications arise when Dan Duryea, Loft's bodyguard, who knew about Loft's affair with Joan, calls on her and demands \$5000 as his price for silence. Joan confers with Robinson, who decides that Duryea, too, must be killed lest their secret be found out. When the attempt to kill Duryea fails, Robinson decides to swallow poison as the only way out of his predicament. As his life fades away, Robinson is awakened by the club's steward—he had been having a vicious dream.

Nunnally Johnson wrote the screen play and produced it, and Fritz Lang directed it.

Adult entertainment.

**"Laura" with Dana Andrews, Gene Tierney
and Clifton Webb**
(20th Century-Fox; time, 88 min.)

A well produced, intelligently directed, murder mystery melodrama, set against a smart society background. The story is so cleverly contrived, and so many persons are under suspicion, that one cannot be certain at any time as to the identity of the murderer. There is no foolish type of comedy, caused by a stupid detective bungling matters up; instead, the mystery is worked out in a logical manner and is certain to please followers of this type of melodrama. Dana Andrews makes a convincing detective, and Clifton Webb, as a debonair, egotistic critic-columnist, who eventually reveals himself as the murderer, gives a polished performance. The dialogue is exceptionally good:—

The brutal murder of Gene Tierney, a glamorous advertising executive, sets detective Dana Andrews on the trail of the murderer. Investigating her acquaintances, Andrews learns that Gene had gained prominence in her field through the aid of Clifton Webb, who had been madly in love with her, and that she had been engaged to Vincent Price, a charming but worthless fellow, who had been having an affair with Judith Anderson, an extremely jealous woman. Inconclusive bits of evidence lead Andrews to suspect all three. While searching Gene's apartment for additional clues, Andrews falls asleep in a chair. He is astonished when awakened by Gene, who demands an explanation of his presence. Questioning her, Andrews learns that she had been at her country home, out of contact with the newspapers and radio since the night of her supposed murder. Gene examines the dress of the murdered girl and identifies it as that of a model, with whom Price had been friendly. A charge of buckshot had all but blown the dead girl's head off, and she had been mistakenly identified as Gene. Gaps in Gene's story lead Andrews to suspect her, too. Carefully shifting his clues, Andrews visits Webb's apartment and finds conclusive evidence linking him with the crime. Meanwhile Webb, noticing the warmth that had sprung up between Andrews and Gene, visits her apartment and confesses to her that he had meant to kill her, not the model, so that no other man would have her. He attempts to kill her, but the timely arrival of Andrews and the police save Gene.

Jay Dratler, Samuel Hoffenstein, and Betty Reinhardt wrote the screen play, and Otto Preminger produced and directed it.

Morally unobjectionable.

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THE SOLUTION IS GOOD PICTURES

Recently it was suggested in these columns that the only way for the American producers to beat the game of the foreign governments seeking to place restrictions on American pictures was to send to those countries nothing but choice pictures so that their picture-going publics, by comparing the quality of the native pictures, imposed on them by government decree, with the quality of the pictures we export to them, will recognize the superiority of our pictures and will either compel their governments to ease the restrictions or wait until an American picture is shown before going to a picture-show.

Last week the United States Department of Commerce made a similar suggestion in a comprehensive report titled, "Motion Picture Markets of Latin America." This report, consisting of 201 pages, was compiled by Nathan D. Golden, Chief of the Motion Picture Unit of the Department's Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. It warns the American producers that "films produced in the studios of Mexico and Argentina are coming to constitute, today, rather potent competition," and it points out that "the importance to the American industry of maintaining this Latin American market as an outlet for its product cannot be over-emphasized, especially when one notes that 80 per cent of the films shown in that great area are of American make. A continuance of this high percentage is obviously vital to the economics of the American motion picture industry in the post-war era."

In its analysis of the conditions that the American producer-distributors face in the Brazilian motion picture market, the report, under the heading "Suggestions for Improving the Effectiveness of American Films," states the following:

"A fair number of American films shown here are masterpieces of art—the photographic technique, action, thematic development, and continuity being carried to approximately the maximum.

"Good films are highly effective and desirable and though there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of American films released during the past years, only a small proportion of the American films sent to Brazil are of the highest quality. In fact, the majority scale downward towards mediocrity. Local audiences, the theatre owners, and the distributors view with dissatisfaction the disproportionate number of mediocre films, termed 'screen time fillers' by the trade.

"An obvious conclusion and seemingly warranted suggestion for improving the effectiveness of American films is that more good quality films and less mediocre ones be sent to this country. It is believed that the American producers turn out more produc-

tions than can be adequately absorbed by the Brazilian market and the above-mentioned suggestion could possibly be partially accomplished under present production status if the producers will exercise discrimination in their choice of films which are sent to Brazil instead of sending out all productions indiscriminately."

As it has already been said in these columns, the producer-distributors should appoint an impartial committee that will have the final say in the selection of pictures that should be sent to foreign countries, with a view towards maintaining, and perhaps even enlarging, the domination of the world markets by American pictures. In view of the fact that the American companies produce more pictures than can be adequately absorbed by any foreign country, with the exception, of course, of Great Britain, it would indeed be wise to withdraw from export the mediocre pictures and send abroad only the good product. The adoption of such a policy will eventually gain for the American companies greater revenues than they can hope for under a policy of indiscriminate selection.

Home production in the Latin American countries is beginning to offer a substantial challenge to the American producers, and it can be expected that the British and French picture industries, in the coming post-war era, will do their utmost to make inroads on our industry's domination, not only of the Latin American market, but also of the other foreign markets. And unless the American companies adopt a far-sighted policy of exporting only the best pictures they make, their domination of these world markets will surely fade.

The trade papers report that representatives of the different American motion picture companies met last week for the purpose of setting up a foreign trade association so that they could put up a united front against any unwarranted discrimination against American pictures in foreign markets. Such an association should, of course, have its advantages in helping the American producers sell their pictures, but, in the final analysis, the success of American product in the foreign markets will be measured by the attractiveness of this product to the foreign picture-going publics. Hence, the producers will have to do more than just agitate; they will have to learn to discriminate—to choose the good pictures from the general run of product.

And after they have practiced discrimination for awhile, who can tell what may happen? They may develop their sense of discrimination to such an extent that they will apply it to the domestic market, with the result that the American public, too, will get better pictures.

There is yet a chance that, out of the troubles with the foreign markets, the exhibitors in this country may derive some benefit.

"Moonlight and Cactus" with Leo Carrillo and the Andrew Sisters

(Universal, Sept. 8; time, 60 min.)

An entertaining program comedy, with tuneful popular music. Though the story and treatment are typical of the usual run of program musicals ground out by Universal, the comedy situations and the dialogue are considerably funnier. The Andrew Sisters are as peppy as ever, and their singing of a number of popular songs is pleasant to the ear. Leo Carrillo and Shemp Howard carry the burden of the comedy effectively, and Mitch Ayres and his orchestra furnish the music:—

Petty Officer Tom Seidel of the Merchant Marine returns on shore leave to his San Diego cattle ranch, bringing with him a number of his shipmates, including Eddie Quillan, Murray Alper, Shemp Howard, and Tom Kennedy, as well as the ship's band (Mitch Ayres and his orchestra). Arriving at the ranch, Seidel is at first disconcerted to find that it was being managed entirely by women, due to the manpower shortage. Elyse Knox, the foreman, headed the feminine cowhands, assisted by the Andrew Sisters and by Minerva Urecal, the housekeeper. Seidel congratulates Elyse on her management of the ranch, but she confesses to him that large numbers of his cattle had been disappearing mysteriously. Seidel decides to employ Leo Carrillo, a neighboring rancher, who made fabulous claims about being a detective, to track down the cattle thieves. Unknown to Seidel, Carrillo himself was the thief. At a gay fiesta given by Carrillo at his hacienda, Seidel and Elyse discover a number of their cattle. Carrillo, accused, covers up his stealing by telling Seidel that he had merely spirited the cattle away for safekeeping while he was away at war. His property restored, Seidel makes sure of keeping his lady foreman by marrying her before returning to duty.

Eugene Conrad and Paul Gerard Smith wrote the screen play, Frank Gross produced it, and Eddie Cline directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Faces in the Fog" with Jane Withers, Paul Kelly and John Litel

(Republic, no release date set; time, 71 min.)

An interesting program drama, based on the juvenile delinquency theme. As compared with the numerous pictures produced recently, based on a similar theme, this is by far a better one, for it handles the problem in a restrained and intelligent manner, without resorting to sensationalism. This picture, too, place the blame on irresponsible parents, but it does this with a minimum of preachment, putting over its message through the actions of the players. Though the story presents little that is novel, it has considerable heart interest, and one feels sympathetic towards Jane Withers and Eric Sinclair, the juvenile leads, because of their display of fine traits:—

Seventeen-year-old Jane Withers, whose parents (Lee Patrick and Paul Kelly) were self centered and pleasure-loving, falls in love with eighteen-year-old Eric Sinclair, whose parents (Dorothy Peterson and John Litel) were devoted and understanding. When Bob Stebbins, Jane's younger brother, is scratched by a bullet in a mixup with a group of rowdy boys, Litel, a physician, treats the wound but does not report it to the police in deference to Jane's pleas. The police, however, learn of the incident from another source,

and admonish Kelly to take better care of his children. Kelly, assuming that Litel was responsible, forbids Jane to see Eric again. Jane attends a school dance with Richard Byron, a young hoodlum, who provokes a fight with Eric when he tries to speak to Jane. Hearing the school principal approaching, Byron drives off in his car with Jane. Eric follows in his own car. Speeding, Byron hits a pedestrian. Eric offers to take the victim to the hospital while Byron reports the accident to the police. Byron deliberately fails to report, and blackmails Jane into silence by threatening to reveal that Litel did not report her brother's bullet wound. Eric, charged with the accident, maintains silence to protect Jane from her father's wrath. He is expelled from school, and enlists in the Army. Faced with their impending separation, Jane and Eric elope secretly. After the ceremony, they go to a motel, where Eric's car is seen by Byron, who misunderstands. Byron telephones Jane's father. The infuriated man rushes to the motel and, without waiting for an explanation, shoots and wounds Eric. Kelly is arrested and charged with attempted murder. Jane, to win sympathy for her father, persuades Eric to conceal their marriage, and even perjures herself to gain his acquittal. After the trial, Jane returns home only to find her parents still critical of her. Disillusioned and unhappy, she abruptly tells them of her marriage and leaves to spend a short honeymoon with Eric before his departure overseas. By the time she returns home, her parents realize their faults and determine to turn over a new leaf.

Jack Townley wrote the screen play, Herman Milakowsky produced it, and John English directed it. The cast includes H. B. Warner, Gertrude Michael and others. Unobjectionable morally.

"The Man in Half Moon Street" with Nils Asther and Helen Walker

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 92 min.)

A tense "suspense" melodrama, of better than program grade; its lack of marquee names, however, make it best suitable for the top half of a double-bill. The story, which revolves around a charming, youthful-looking scientist, who had discovered a means of perpetuating his youth, is essentially a murder melodrama, but it has been handled so well that it has not been made gruesome. There is no real mystery involved since early in the story the spectator is made aware of the scientist's machinations. Nevertheless, it grips one's attention due to the interesting manner in which the police learn of his secret, thus bringing a halt to his sinister killings, and saving the heroine from marrying a man who more than one hundred years her senior, although he appeared to be a young man. The closing scenes, where the scientist turns into a very old man, are dramatic and exciting:—

Nils Asther, a scientist and painter, keeps secret from Helen Walker, his fiancée, the fact that he was actually more than one hundred-years-old, having kept his youthful appearance through a series of gland operations performed by Reinhold Schunzel, an aged scientist, was to perfect a glandular treatment that would perpetuate one's youth. With Asther, surgery was required every ten years, and each time a young man had been murdered in order that his glands be transferred to Asther's body. Helen's father (Edmond Breon) and her family doctor (Paul Cavanagh) become suspicious of Asther's secret experiments and decide to investigate his past. On the eve of his mar-

riage to Helen, Asther, in need of another operation, becomes frantic when he learns that Schunzel was paralyzed and could not operate. His search for an unscrupulous doctor to perform the operation proves futile. Desperate, he persuades Helen to elope with him to Paris, hoping to find a doctor there. Meanwhile in Scotland Yard, checking on information furnished by Cavanagh, is amazed to find evidence linking Asther with murders that had been committed for the past hundred years. Asther, aware that his secret had been found out, manages to elude the detectives and to board a channel train with Helen. En route, he becomes very ill and realizes that his glandular operation had been postponed too long. As he feels his skin wrinkling with age, Asther makes a full confession to Helen. He becomes a very old man within a few minutes and, while trying to escape the detectives at the first train stop, collapses and dies on the platform. Helen, admiring him for the daring of his attempt to outwit nature, returns to London feeling that their love will never die.

Charles Kenyon wrote the screen play, Walter MacEwen produced it, and Ralph Murphy directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"The Very Thought of You" with
Dennis Morgan and Eleanor Parker**
(Warner Brothers, Nov. 1; time, 99 min.)

A good topical romantic drama, with a particular appeal for women because it deals with the brief romance and hasty marriage of a soldier on a furlough to a young lady, despite the opposition of certain members of her family who opposed hasty war marriages. One's interest lags occasionally because of the inclusion of extraneous episodes, but on the whole it holds one's attention well. The story should have mass appeal, because the plight of the young lovers will be understood by the rank and file; they will feel sympathy for them throughout. Eleanor Parker, a newcomer, is warmly appealing as the heroine, playing her role with tenderness and understanding; there is no doubt that she is star material. It has considerable comedy, provoked by the gay antics of Dane Clark, Dennis Morgan's buddy:—

Returning to Pasadena after many lonely months in the Aleutians, Sergeants Dennis Morgan and Dane Clark strike up an acquaintance with Eleanor Parker and Faye Emerson, workers in a parachute factory. Eleanor invites Morgan to dinner at her home, while Faye and Clark go off on a date. At Eleanor's home, Morgan meets her mother (Beulah Bondi), a cranky woman; her older sister (Andrea King), unhappily married to a sailor overseas; her brother (John Alvin), a cynical sort; her younger sister (Georgia Lee Settle), a friendly adolescent; and her father (Henry Travers), a mild-mannered, likeable man. The bickering of the family embarrasses both Eleanor and Morgan, but it does not prevent their romance from blossoming. Despite the family's attempt to discourage the romance, Eleanor and Morgan marry, one day before the end of his furlough. Eleanor's mother and Andrea, determined to break up the marriage, intercept Morgan's letters to her; they sought to convince her that hasty war marriages, such as Andrea's, end in grief. A telephone call from Morgan, asking her to meet him in San Diego for a few brief hours before his departure overseas, dispells any doubts that Eleanor may have had because of her failure to hear from him. Eleanor

berates her mother and sister for withholding Morgan's letters, and, upon her return from San Diego, goes to live with Faye. With the birth of her baby, Eleanor becomes reconciled with her family, who by now realized her deep love for Morgan. Meanwhile Andrea's husband (William Prince) returns from overseas wounded. Andrea, deeply touched by his devotion, confesses her unfaithfulness during his absence and begs his forgiveness; Eleanor had taught her the value of true love. Homeward bound after recovering from wounds received in battle, both Morgan and Clark are joyfully met at the station by Eleanor, Faye, and the family, and by Morgan's little son.

Alvah Besie and Delmer Daves wrote the screen play, and Jerry Wald produced it. Mr. Daves directed it.

Morally suitable for all.

**"The Girl Rush" with Alan Carney,
Wally Brown and Frances Langford**
(RKO, no release date set; time, 66 min.)

An ordinary program comedy. The musical numbers are enjoyable, and Frances Langford's singing is pleasant to the ear, but the story is so inane that it barely holds one's interest. Slapstick is the main source of the comedy, but little of it is effective. Allan Carney, Wally Brown and Vera Vague, work hard to put freshness into trite situations, but their efforts fall mostly flat, for the material is poor; in only a few situations does the comedy provoke laughter. The closing scenes, in which a group of miners disguise themselves as women and beat up a gang of outlaws in a free-for-all barroom brawl, should provoke uproarious laughter; it is the best sequence in the picture:—

Carney and Brown operate a successful cabaret show in San Francisco until the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill leaves them without customers. To raise money to take the show to New York, the boys persuade Frances Langford, their leading lady, to hold the troupe together while they go prospecting for gold. The boys are unsuccessful and, hungry and broke, they make their way to the boom town of Red Creek, where they get themselves in trouble trying to work a crooked shell game in a crooked gambling palace. Learning that the boys had a girl show in San Francisco, the miners, hungry for the sight of women, raise the money to bring the troupe to Red Creek, and put the boys on a stage coach driven by Robert Mitchum and Paul Hurst, two of the miners. En route, outlaws headed by Cy Kendall try to hold up the coach, but they are driven off by the two miners who instruct the boys to proceed to San Francisco. There, Carney and Brown inform the troupe that they struck it rich, and prepare to take them to New York. But their deception is exposed when Mitchum and Hurst arrive. The girls become furious upon learning the truth, but Frances, attracted to Mitchum, persuades them to travel to Red Creek. As the troupe's caravan nears the town, Mitchum is warned that the outlaws intended to kill every man in the caravan and to kidnap the girls. The men disguise themselves as women, and best the outlaws in a furious fight. That evening, the boys stage their show to a packed house, but they soon find themselves without customers when a new gold strike is announced.

Robert E. Kent wrote the screen play, John Auer produced it, and Gordon Douglas directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"And Now Tomorrow" with Alan Ladd and Loretta Young

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 85 min.)

Despite its rather routine story, this romantic drama is a fairly good entertainment, with a particular appeal to women. Unlike his previous pictures, in which he has been cast in "tough guy" roles, this time Alan Ladd plays the part of a rising young doctor, an ear specialist, who, not only effects a cure for the deaf heroine, but also clears up the romantic complications in her life, caused by her affliction. As a doctor, Ladd is hardly believable, but he does make his characterization a likeable one, as does Loretta Young, as the deaf heiress. The story lacks action, but this is made up for by its emotional qualities. It has been given a good production:—

Loretta Young, whose wealthy New England family owned all the textile mills in Blairstown, is stricken with meningitis while celebrating her engagement to Barry Sullivan. As a result of her illness, Loretta becomes deaf. Dr. Cecil Kellaway, family physician and friend, sends her to many specialists, all of whom consider her affliction incurable. Meanwhile Susan Hayward, her sister, falls in love with Sullivan, but both keep their attachment secret because of a guilty sense of loyalty to Loretta. Kellaway, determined to cure Loretta, asks Alan Ladd, a promising young surgeon, who had been brought up in the poor section of town, to study her case. Though bitter against her family because of wrongs that had been done to his father, Ladd agrees to treat her. Friction springs up between the two; he considered her a hopeless snob, and she looked upon him as an upstart. But both are drawn closer together when she aids him while he performs an emergency mastoidectomy on a poor mill worker's child. Meanwhile Ladd learns of the secret love between Susan and Sullivan. He tries subtly to get Loretta to break her engagement to Sullivan, but she resents his interference and sets a date for her marriage. On the eve of her wedding, Loretta learns that Ladd had developed a serum that had been tried successfully on deaf rabbits. She pleads with him to use the serum treatment on her, but he hesitates lest it prove fatal to a human. He finally consents and, though she almost dies, the treatment proves successful. Before she can appraise the family of her cure, she overhears Susan and Sullivan reveal their love for each other, a love both had agreed to sacrifice for her sake. Loretta gives them her blessing and, realizing her own love for Ladd, rushes to him.

Frank Partos and Raymond Chandler wrote the screen play from the novel by Rachel Field. Fred Kohlmar produced it, and Irving Pichel directed it. The cast includes Beulah Bondi, Grant Mitchell, Helen Mack and others. Unobjectionable morally.

"Ministry of Fear" with Ray Milland and Marjorie Reynolds

(Paramount, no release date set; time 84 min.)

A thrilling spy melodrama. It holds one's attention throughout because of the mystery surrounding the identities of the spies, and because of the danger to Ray Milland, who, following his release from an insane asylum, where he had been confined for the mercy killing of his incurable wife, becomes innocently involved in a series of strange events that set him on the trail of the spies. The story is so cleverly contrived that one does not guess the head spy's identity until the closing scenes. And his identity comes as a surprise, for he is the one least suspected. The fact that Milland, in trailing the spies, is compelled to dodge Scotland Yard because of his past record, adds considerably to the suspense. The action takes place in England:—

Waiting for a train to take him to London, Milland visits a charity bazaar, sponsored by the Mothers of Free Nations, where he wins a cake in a raffle. He is followed into his train compartment by an apparently blind man, who knocks him unconscious and flees with the cake. Milland chases the "blind" man to a deserted shack, but before he can reach him a bomb from a Nazi plane demolishes the building. Convinced that the man was a spy, Milland de-

termines to get to the bottom of the mystery. He visits the London office of the Mothers of Free Nations, where he meets Carl Esmond, and his sister, Marjorie Reynolds, Austrian refugees, who headed the organization. They offer to help him. With Esmond's aid, Milland traces the spies to the apartment of Hillary Brooke, a spiritualist, where he becomes involved in a mysterious murder during a seance. Circumstances point to him as the murderer, and Esmond helps him to escape before the police arrive. Dodging the police because of his past record, Milland continues his hunt for the spies. The spies trick him into carrying a package containing a bomb, and he barely escapes with his life when it explodes. Questioned in the hospital by Inspector Percy Waram of Scotland Yard, Milland informs him of the strange happenings since his release from the asylum. The inspector joins him on the hunt and, together, they discover that the spies had hidden in the cake a roll of microfilm on which had been photographed vital British defense plans. They discover also that the spies had staged the murder at the seance to terrorize Milland and frighten him off. Milland eventually tracks down the ring and uncovers Esmond as its chief. Esmond tries to shoot Milland, but he is himself killed by Marjorie, who had been completely ignorant of his activities.

Seton I. Miller wrote the screen play and produced it. Fritz Lang directed it. The cast includes Dan Duryea, Alan Napier and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"One Body Too Many" with Jack Haley, Jean Parker and Bela Lugosi

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 75 min.)

Mildly amusing program fare. It is a ridiculous conglomeration of comedy, romance and murder-mystery melodrama, which may get by with indiscriminating audiences; others will certainly be bored. For laughs, it depends with little success on all the stock tricks to create an eerie atmosphere—an isolated mansion, hidden passages, a storm, a leering butler, shadows, and several mysterious murders. Despite reasonably fair performances, the actors are handicapped by the mediocre material; for that reason they fail to make their respective roles impressive. Its seventy-five minutes running time is much too long for a picture of its type:—

Jack Haley, an insurance salesman, leaves for the home of an eccentric millionaire to close a deal for a large insurance policy. Unknown to Haley, the millionaire had died on the previous day, and his will stipulated that his heirs were not to leave his isolated mansion until after his body had been entombed in a glass-domed vault, which had not yet been built. Those who left the estate would automatically lose their share of the inheritance, and in the event the body was buried underground, instead of in the tomb, the heir granted the largest bequest would receive the smallest share, and the heir with the smallest bequest would receive the larger share. The heirs, having no trust in one another, telephone a detective agency to guard the body. Haley, arriving at the mansion, is mistaken for a detective and put on guard. Frightened, he tries to leave, but he agrees to remain when Jean Parker, one of the heirs, informs him that her life was in danger. After a succession of events, in which he is knocked unconscious, and the millionaire's body is stolen, Haley determines to find the body and expose the guilty heir. He gets himself into all sorts of complications as he wanders through secret passages that lead to the different rooms, and is even suspected of murder when a few of the heirs mysteriously lose their lives. He eventually proves his innocence, locates the missing body, and exposes the murderer, winning Jean's love as a reward.

Winston Miller and Maxwell Shane wrote the screen play, and Frank McDonald directed it. It is a Pine-Thomas production. The cast includes Bernard Bedell, Blanche Yurka, Douglas Fowley, Lyle Talbot, Lucien Littlefield and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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P. S. HARRISON, Editor

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1944

No. 44

The Screen Directors' Guild Takes Exception

Hollywood, Cal.

October 21, 1944

P. S. Harrison, Editor

HARRISON'S REPORTS

1270 Sixth Ave.

New York 20, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Harrison:

The Directors' Guild wishes to answer your three-issue series entitled "Wanton Waste in Production" in which the Director was continuously labeled the "Wanton Waster." The quotations you used were so grossly misleading that the matter might have been laughable were it not for the fact that thousands of exhibitors read your paper and consider your Reports somewhat Biblical in reliability.

May we remind you of the old saw in Logic: "Joe is a fool. Joe is a man. Therefore, all men are fools." The quotations you have seen fit to print seem to be governed by that kind of logic. Your first executive interviewed said: "I have seen Directors shoot as many as sixty takes of the same scene—a cruel waste." That, Mr. Harrison, is like saying: "I have seen an actor under the influence of narcotics . . ."—perhaps true, but so rare as to be ludicrous as an example of either directors, in the first instance, or actors in the second! Your executive's next attack is on a director who ordered twenty-three takes printed on one scene! The crafty executive ordered five of the takes printed into twenty-three positives; he said the director "did not know the difference." This ancient practical joke has been kicked around Hollywood for many years. There is not a studio in Hollywood that would permit a director to print twenty-three takes of one scene today. This is 1944, Mr. Harrison. Pictures have sound now. We are at war.

You pick up the attack yourself next: "Shooting should be merely routine work, for after all the director is merely the interpreter of the action that is in the script." The "Wanton Waster" now becomes a different kind of target. If directing is merely routine work, why will executives pay one director a hundred thousand dollars to direct a picture yet pay another but one thousand?? Could it be because the executive has found that the first director does not do "merely routine work," but delivers him pictures that substantiate the higher salary in profits to the company?

Your first executive announces that his studio is determined to free themselves of "the director bondage," whatever that means, and that he kicked out a director who refused to cut down certain scenes. There is another side to this picture—the long list of directors who have been "kicked out" because they refused to shoot a bad script given them by executives; then there is the sadder list of directors who, through economic necessity, have been forced to shoot bad scripts in spite of their protests, because some executive wanted to fulfill a commitment. The "grateful" executive has then "kicked out" the director in expiation of his sins.

This same executive said: "I have known cases where, in a two-hour picture, the first rough assembly was 150,000 feet. . . ." Mr. Harrison, he means ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY REELS OF FILM! Thousand foot reels. Many, many years ago Von Stroheim made a picture called "Greed" which was supposed to have run over a hundred reels. We challenge your executive to name one picture since the advent of talking pictures that has run one hundred and fifty thousand feet in rough assembly. He knows "cases" (plural)—ask him to prove it!

The next attack reads: "Many directors still go under the theory that, unless they WASTE MONEY for 'perfection,' they will not be considered good directors." Throw out the words "waste money for" and substitute "strive for" and your sentence makes sense. Why label a director's efforts to get a memorable scene on the screen a waste of money? Leo McCarey is a "perfectionist"—would you prefer that he didn't "waste money" to achieve pictures like "Going My Way?"

Your first executive then outdoes himself in pontifical wisdom by asserting: "The actors should study their lines before appearing before the camera; and they should be rehearsed on the set before shooting starts." He certainly knows the answers, or had you gotten around to the doorman's opinion of directors at this time, along with the grips, etc.?

"So sensational were this executive's disclosures," you state, that you interviewed the heads of other studios. It is astonishing to read, in this general effort to prove that directors are wanton wasters, that one executive stated: "Those responsible for the waste of directors are the heads of the companies more than the directors themselves." However, this studio head made his attack in a new direction: "Every director feels that the picture he is *producing* (sic) should win him the Academy Award," a pleasant thought, but not quite true. "He wants to dazzle the industry, not with the profits that the picture will bring, but with his direction." You note that this statement is linked o "every director." Believe us, Mr. Harrison, if any, not every, director merely "dazzles the industry" and brings in no profit, he will very soon, to use your earlier executive's pretty phrase, be "kicked out." If an executive signs an "industry-dazzler" to direct a picture, who is the fool, the director or the executive?? A director's record is no secret, he is chosen because of that record, the films he has directed.

In spite of these executives' charges of "wanton waste" on the part of the directors, your first executive confesses: "most scripts are over-written . . ." and hundreds of thousands of dollars are lost "just because the screen play was not prepared with patience and judgment so as to eliminate the unnecessary shooting." For the edification of your readers, the screen play the executive mentions is the script the EXECUTIVE has given the director to shoot, a script prepared under the supervision of an executive. Wanton waste? And your last executive has this confession to make:

(Continued on last page)

"Murder in the Blue Room" with Donald Cook, Anne Gwynne and John Litel
(Universal, Dec. 1; time, 61 min.)

This combination of murder mystery melodrama, comedy, and music, is a mediocre program entertainment. There is mystery surrounding the murder, but the story is so inane that it fails to hold the spectator's attention. Moreover, the comedy situations fall flat because they are forced. The musical interpolations are dragged in by the ear, but even so they are a welcome relief from the rest of the proceedings. Although everyone in the cast tries to make something of his or her role, they are helpless; hampered by the ridiculous story; the general effect is boredom:—

Shortly after his marriage to Nella Walker, a widow, John Litel persuades her to re-open her old mansion, which had been closed for twenty years following the mysterious murder of her former husband. The murder had been committed in the mansion's blue room, which was kept under lock and key. At a reception celebrating the re-opening of the house, Anne Gwynne, Litel's stepdaughter, invites Grace McDonald, Betty Kean, and June Preisser, night club entertainers, to sing for the guests. Among those present were Andrew Tombes, the family doctor, Donald Cook, a mystery story writer, and Bill MacWilliams. Both Cook and MacWilliams were rivals for Anne's affections, and each was interested in solving the mystery of her father's death. That night, both Cook and MacWilliams insist upon sleeping in the blue room, with MacWilliams winning the honor. The following morning, MacWilliams is found murdered. Police Inspector Regis Toomey takes charge of the case, ordering all the guests to remain in the house. The three girl entertainers, who had left the estate, are brought back by the police. The mystery deepens when Cook, spending the night in the blue room, disappears. In tracing the killer, Toomey finds the house honeycombed with many secret underground passages. Meanwhile Cook, too, had found the secret passages and was stalking the killer. An underground chase ensues, in which the three girl entertainers become involved, and a gun fight finally reveals the murderer as Tombes, the doctor.

I. A. L. Diamond and Stanley Davis wrote the screen play, Frank Gross produced it, and Leslie Goodwins directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Bowery to Broadway" with Jack Oakie and Donald Cook
(Universal, Nov. 3; time, 95 min.)

In spite of the fact that this musical offers little that is novel, it is a thoroughly pleasing entertainment, effectively combining music, comedy, and romance in a manner that should suit popular taste. The story, which is set in the period from 1895 to about 1920, is of the typical "backstage" variety, revolving around the ups and downs of two rival cabaret owners, whose efforts to outdo each other leads them from the Bowery to Broadway and eventual success as partners. Although lightweight, the story has some good comedy situations, and it serves adequately to tie in the numerous song and dance numbers, most of which were popular in the period depicted, and all of which are enjoyable. The cast, headed by Jack Oakie and Don-

ald Cook, includes most of the players on the Universal lot. Peggy Ryan and Donald O'Connor do a song and dance specialty; Susanna Foster, Ann Blythe, Maria Montez, and Louise Allbritton sing and take part in the story; and Frank McHugh, Andy Devine, Turhan Bey, George Dolenz, Rosemary DeCamp, Thomas Gomez, Leo Carrillo, Evelyn Ankers, Maude Eburn, Manton Moreland, Ben Carter and Richard Lane are among the others who are featured:—

Oakie and Cook, rival cabaret owners on the Bowery, constantly scheme against each other in an effort to put on the better show. Determined to do bigger things, Cook leaves the Bowery and opens a theatre on 14th Street. Oakie, not to be outdone, follows him and opens another theatre across the street. Their rivalry continues, with Cook becoming the more successful one as a result of his making a sensational singing star out of Susanna Foster. When Susanna, upset because of a quarrel with Turhan Bey, her fiance, falls and injures herself during a performance, Cook is compelled to close the show. Meanwhile Oakie, too, finds luck running against him. Urged by Father Andy Devine to forget their feud, Cook and Oakie form a partnership and open a theatre on 42nd Street. They stage one musical success after another, reaching their greatest triumph when they sign Maria Montez, a European musical comedy star. Cook falls in love with Maria, and agrees to star her in dramas instead of musical shows. Oakie disagrees with the plan and breaks the partnership. Cook presents Maria in a number of dramatic "flops," and soon finds himself hopelessly in debt. Oakie appeals to Maria to leave Cook, and induces her to secretly finance a new musical show to be produced in partnership with Cook. The show proves to be their greatest musical hit, and when Cook demands to know "the angel's" identity, Oakie takes him to Maria.

Edmund Joseph, Bart Lytton, and Arthur T. Horman wrote the screen play, John Grant produced it, and Charles Lamont directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Bowery Champs" with the East Side Kids
(Monogram, Dec. 9; time, 62 min.)

A fairly entertaining "East Side Kids" program comedy-melodrama, typical in action and in comedy of the other pictures in the series. It relies for its entertainment on the rowdy antics of the "Kids" rather than on the story, which is thin. This time the boys, working for a newspaper, become self-appointed investigators in the solving of a murder mystery, which they proceed to clear up in their usual "high jinks" fashion, provoking considerable laughter by the mishaps that befall them. Although little originality has gone into the treatment of the story, it moves along at a fast pace, with most of the excitement occurring in the closing scenes, where the "Kids" trap the criminals:—

In the absence of Gabriel Dell, the Evening Express' police reporter, Leo Gorcey, a copy boy, and his pals, who operated the newspaper's delivery truck, decide to investigate a murder, for which Evelyn Brent, the ex-wife of the victim, was sought by the police. The boys trace Evelyn to her apartment, where they become convinced of her innocence and spirit her away to their clubhouse before the police can get to her. A

clue leads the "Kids" to a cafe operated by Ian Keith, the victim's former partner, where they learn conclusively that he and Thelma White, an entertainer, with whom the dead man had been friendly, were responsible for the murder, and that they were trying to steal from Evelyn a fortune in bonds, which she had entrusted to her dead ex-husband. Meanwhile Dell, the police reporter, together with a police officer, visits the scene of the crime and discovers a button that links the murder with his own editor, not knowing that Huntz Hall, one of the "Kids," had dropped it there after finding it in the newspaper's office. The police clear the editor of suspicion just as word comes that Keith and his henchmen had trapped the "Kids" in the cabaret, where a furious fight was in progress. The police rush to the cabaret, arriving in time to rescue the "Kids" and capture the criminals.

Earle Snell wrote the screen play, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. Barney Sarecky was the associate producer. The cast includes Billy Benedict, Bobby Jordan, and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Brazil" with Tito Guizar,
Edward Everett Horton and Virginia Bruce**
(*Republic, no release date set; time, 91 min.*)

Produced on a lavish scale, this is a delightful combination of romantic farce and music, different from the usual run of stories generally found in musical entertainments. Its Brazilian background is colorful and interesting, the comedy situations good, the dialogue witty, and the music by Ary Barrosa, celebrated Latin-American composer, is so tuneful that one finds himself humming the songs at the conclusion of the picture. Tito Guizar, well-known radio singer, plays the male romantic lead. He has a charming personality, an accent that adds to his charm, and a good flair for comedy. In addition, his singing is pleasurable. Edward Everett Horton, as Guizar's American agent, does excellent work, provoking considerable laughter by his fretful antics. The introduction of a new South American dance by Veloz and Yolanda is an outstanding highlight. Towards the finish, Roy Rogers appears as a guest star at a Rio carnival, where he sings one song. His introduction, however, is so obviously commercial that it detracts, rather than adds, from an otherwise enjoyable picture:—

Virginia Bruce, an authoress, whose best-seller, "Why Marry a Latin?" had antagonized many Latin Americans, visits Rio de Janeiro to gather material for a new book. She meets Tito Guizar, popular Brazilian composer and singer, who poses as a guide in order to be near her. Learning from Edward Everett Horton, his best friend and agent, about Virginia's disparaging book, Guizar determines to punish her by winning her heart, then leaving her. He appears at a week-end party attended by Virginia, where he masquerades as his own twin brother, winning her love with his romancing, but falling in love himself. Guizar becomes so preoccupied with duping Virginia that he finds it difficult to concentrate on the creation of a new song, for which Richard Lane, an American song publisher, had already advanced Horton money. Lane had been pressing Horton for the song. Lane's arrival in Brazil complicates matters considerably as

Horton and Guizar resort to devious tricks in an effort to placate him. Virginia inspires Guizar to write the song, and he invites her to spend the weekend at his wealthy uncle's (Fortunio Bonanova) coffee plantation, where he intended to reveal his true identity to her. Horton, unaware that Guizar had fallen in love with Virginia, informs her of Guizar's duplicity and of his intention to punish her because of her book. Disillusioned, Virginia leaves the estate and plans to return home. Guizar desperately searches for her, finally locating her at a gay Rio carnival, where he convinces her of his love.

Frank Gill, Jr. and Laura Kerr wrote the screen play, Robert North produced it, and Joseph Santley directed it. The cast includes Robert Livingston, Frank Puglia and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**AN INTELLIGENT WAY TO HANDLE
THE BOOKING OF ADVANCED
ADMISSION PRICE PICTURES**

In its handling of advanced admission price pictures, the RKO theatre circuit in New York City is following a policy that should be of interest to every exhibitor, for it not only affects the fewest regular patrons who might object to a higher scale, but it also allows the exhibitor to retain his preferred week-end business.

RKO's policy has been tried successfully with both "Song of Bernadette" and "Wilson." These pictures were shown, not during the week-end, but during the first half of the week, when business is normally slow. Notwithstanding, the box-office results were exceptionally good. The circuit's officials attribute this, first to the fact that regular patrons, who normally attended their theatres on week-ends, did not object to paying a higher price scale for a special mid-week performance, and secondly, to the fact that the audiences included many persons who do not attend the theatres except for the outstanding pictures.

According to a report in *Motion Picture Daily*, officials of the RKO circuit and of 20th Century-Fox, the distributors of the aforementioned pictures, advance the theory that "this method takes cognizance of the opposition that exists on the part of regular patrons to advanced admission price films. In playing the film on a Monday through Wednesday period . . . all patrons who wish to see the film are enabled to do so without interfering with the attendance of regular patrons who customarily concentrate their attendance at the weekend and would ordinarily be kept away from the house if they did not care for advanced prices on Saturdays and Sundays."

The plan followed by the RKO circuit is worthy of study by the exhibitors, for it not only does away with the distributors' demands for preferred playing time on advanced price pictures, but it also allows for the showing of the picture on a basis satisfactory to both the distributor and the exhibitor, without interfering with the exhibitor's normal week-end trade. And no distributor should object to having his "special" shown during the early part of the week for it can rightfully be assumed that any picture entitled to advanced admission prices is strong enough to attract people from their homes no matter what day of the week it is shown.

"If the scripts are over-written, causing the negative cost to run high; if all the values in the story are not brought out, the fault lies in the neglect of the studio executives, or even with their own laziness . . . they should not pass the buck." Perhaps a better title for your series, Mr. Harrison, should have been: "They Should Not Pass The Buck!"

We make no claim that every director is a paragon of efficiency, we make no claim that some directors have not been guilty of waste, but we do attack the many isolated and sometimes untrue statements that you have presented as indicative that directors are responsible for wanton waste in production. To prove your point you sought out the film editor next who "knows more about the wastefulness of the directors than the member of any of the other crafts."

This film editor's first statement, like some of the executives' statements, reaches into the realm of the fantastic. The film editor said: "In one case I know, a director shot fifty takes of one scene. When I was making the first assembly, I asked him which take to use. 'Oh' he said to me, —'any one of them will do! Use take One!'" Again, Mr. Harrison, no studio in town would permit the printing of fifty takes of one scene, so this is either a lie or ancient history, and we presume you are talking of the industry as it functions today!

The film editor goes on with perhaps a forgivable bolstering of his ego to state that a wise director has his film editor on the set, watching every scene, to warn the director against making scenes that will not cut. He adds that many directors lack the power of visualization. He states "most directors keep on shooting a scene over and over again because raw stock is, in their opinion, cheap." Your film editor doesn't even have the honesty to imply, as an executive did, that the director might shoot a scene over and over to achieve either perfection, or to "dazzle the industry," but just because raw stock is cheap. It is interesting, however, that he uses the identical words of the first executive: "cruel waste."

Not content with the executives' and the film editor's "expert opinion" on the qualification of directors, you sought out that "jack-of-all trades," the expert carpenter and muscle man, the Grip, for his opinion of directors. Putting aside his hammer and nails, he said to you: "I have seen directors shoot take after take without any rhyme or reason." (Was this particular grip a mind reader as well?) "Their only excuse was that they were trying to attain perfection." (NOTE: It isn't yet customary for directors to offer excuses to grips for shooting a scene over to attain perfection). The grip goes on to protest against directors giving orders to actors during shooting and ruining "virgin" sound track. Really, Mr. Harrison, in the name of common sense and the paper shortage, did your attack on the directors have to go this far? The grip went on to say of directors: "Why do they do it? First, because they do not know any better; secondly, because they want to impress the studio head with the fact that they are hard workers, and that they have great knowledge." By now your grip gives us the benefit of his knowledge by saying: "The studio executive who does not know says to himself: 'What a hard working director!' He never stops to figure out what this director is costing the company. If he knew, he would have taken the director off the picture at once," but, "he is usually impressed when he hears the director give orders to the cameraman to change lenses. . . ." Mr. Harrison, if ever a director ordered a cameraman to change lenses during a scene, or for the sound track, Joe is a fool, Joe is a man, therefore, all men are fools. Including some grips!

We conclude with your own words: "Anyway, I have presented to the industry THESE FACTS with the hope that some attempt will be made to curb the wastefulness of the directors, etc." We are presenting this answer to your articles in the hope that your readers will consider a different kind of logic than that indicated by some of the fantastic

quotations you have used against directors, that different logic being: All directors want to make good pictures. Joe is a director. Joe wants to make good pictures. And, in simple conclusion, Mr. Harrison, if Joe doesn't make good pictures, if Joe wantonly wastes money, if Joe merely dazzles the industry, if Joe doesn't bring profits to his company, — Joe doesn't work here any more.

The Board of Directors
Screen Directors Guild
John Cromwell, President

ANOTHER PROTEST FROM A DIRECTOR

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX FILM CORPORATION

Studios
Beverly Hills, California

October 16, 1944

Mr. P. S. Harrison
1270 Sixth Ave.—Room 1812
New York 20, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Harrison:

I have always had high regard for the impartiality of the reviews in HARRISON'S REPORTS and I have known, of course, of its influence with exhibitors. I have heard you credited, moreover, with utter sincerity. I cannot, therefore, refrain from expressing a sense of bewilderment and shock at the uninformed attack on directors in the three articles on Waste in Production.

Even if I were prepared, as a director, to admit that a portion of the waste you cite is due to directorial extravagance or were due to the director part of the time or in particular instances, I would still resent a series of articles so preposterously documented.

That an indictment so thorough-going has been published with, it is evident, no attempt to check the facts statistically and without giving the accused an opportunity for defense leaves me aghast. At the very least, it makes me wonder why you think I would have any interest in subscribing to HARRISON'S REPORTS.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) Irving Pichel

The following is my reply to Mr. Pichel:

Dear Mr. Pichel:

The information on which I based my editorials entitled, "Wanton Waste in Production," was given to me by some of the highest studio executives in Hollywood.

It was not my intention to make a blanket indictment of directors, but only to criticize such directors as are wasteful with the hope that these would exercise some care. If I was misunderstood, I am sorry and will be glad to make the matter clear in the editorial columns of HARRISON'S REPORTS.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is always ready and willing to publish the other side of any question that is treated editorially, or to present any question with a constructive motive.

Assuring you of my highest regard for your contribution to the welfare of the motion picture business as a director, I am,

Most sincerely yours,
(Signed) P. S. Harrison

Mr. Irving Pichel
20th Century-Fox Studios
Beverly Hills, Cal.
October 23, 1944

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A REVIEWING SERVICE FREE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ADVERTISING

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1944

No. 45

AN ATTACK ON THE CONSENT DECREE ARBITRATION

As most of you undoubtedly know, Harry C. Arthur's St. Louis Amusement Company, and other interested amusement groups, have challenged the legality of the arbitration system set up by the Consent Decree.

Last August, Russell Hardy, former special assistant U. S. Attorney General, now Arthur's attorney, began a series of legal moves to declare the Consent Decree unconstitutional by filing a motion with the St. Louis arbitration tribunal asking for dismissal of a complaint brought by the Princess Theatre against the five consenting distributors for a reduction of clearance. Hardy charged that, inasmuch as his clients were not involved voluntarily in the case, and were not submitting to arbitration, any decision granting the relief sought by the Princess Theatre would be unlawful, because that relief would affect the interests of his clients, thus depriving them of their property rights without due process of law.

Hardy contended that the arbitration system under the Consent Decree was unlawful and violative of Article I, Section I, of the U. S. Constitution, and that the creation of such a system constituted a usurpation and exercise of legislative powers that are vested solely in the Congress, which has not enacted a law authorizing such a system. He contended also that the authority and jurisdiction vested in the American Arbitration Association under the Consent Decree are unlawful and violative of Article III, Section I, of the Constitution, "in that the authority and jurisdiction constitute part of the judicial power of the United States, which the district court has no authority to delegate to the American Arbitration Association or to any other person or agency; and in that the American Arbitration Association is not a court which the Congress has ordained and established, but has unlawfully usurped a part of the judicial power."

In September, Hardy filed in the New York District Court a notice of intention to intervene in the Government's anti-trust suit against the five major distributors. In addition to the aforementioned objections, Hardy's petition asked for a denial of the Government's application for modification of the Consent Decree insofar as it provided for the continuation of the arbitration system. Argument on the petition was originally scheduled for November 3, but this week all parties concerned agreed to a postponement until December 5, because of the Government attorney's pre-occupation with the Schine case in Buffalo.

On October 25, Hardy made his latest legal move

in the U. S. District Court in St. Louis, where he filed a civil action in behalf of his clients against the five major companies, the AAA, and the owners of the Princess and Apollo Theatres, asking that the defendants be directed to cease and desist from conducting or participating in arbitration proceedings relative to clearance, which may affect the theatres of his clients, and from limiting and restricting his clients' transactions with the distributors for motion pictures to be shown in their theatres. This suit asks also for an award of \$285,000, in damages, or treble the amount of damages allegedly sustained by the plaintiffs as a result of arbitration proceedings which they claim affected their theatres.

The legal machinery thus set in motion is charged with possibilities of far-reaching consequences. It threatens, not only the arbitration provisions of the Consent Decree, but also the Decree in its entirety. If successful, it might throw the entire industry into a state of chaos until a new system of selling and a new code of ethics could be devised.

Knowing that exhibitors everywhere are concerned deeply about the probable outcome of these legal proceedings, I consulted a well-informed observer—one whose experience and whose opinions in the past give his words at this time force and conviction. From him, I gathered that the situation is as follows:

When one clears the air of all the legal language, the issue boils down to whether or not an exhibitor, by reason of his having enjoyed a particular clearance over a period of years, has a continuing property right to such a clearance, which, neither the Consent Decree, nor the AAA acting under it, can take away unless the exhibitor agrees to submit himself to their jurisdiction.

The Consent Decree recognizes the exhibitor's right to clearance during the life of his license agreement, for it provides that the arbitrators, in setting any new maximum clearance between theatres involved in a controversy, shall confine themselves to the clearance to be granted in "licenses thereafter entered into." Mr. Hardy's contention, however, seems to be based upon the assumption that, once a theatre has been granted a certain clearance, it has a continuing property right in that clearance, which, even after the license agreement has expired, cannot be disturbed.

With the issue thus narrowed, the weakness of the plaintiff's position becomes evident, and it should dispel any alarm over the security of the Consent Decree and its arbitration provisions. Nevertheless, since the subject is of universal interest to the industry, this paper will continue to discuss it as further developments take place.

"Meet Me in St. Louis" with Judy Garland and Margaret O'Brien

(MGM, no release date set; time, 113 min.)

Excellent mass entertainment. It is a tuneful, merry comedy-drama, which is so wholesome and heart-warming that few will be able to resist its appeal. The story, which has its setting in St. Louis at the turn of the century, revolves around the everyday adventures of a typical middle-class American family, all the members of which are so loveable that the spectator shares their joys and sorrows. Its romantic angles are charming, its humor rich and often hilarious, and it has just enough pathos to tug at one's heart-strings without becoming maudlin. The characterizations of the family members are so finely portrayed by the cast that the spectator can easily identify himself or his relatives, thus adding to his appreciation of the humor.

Basically, the story concerns itself with the romantic entanglements of the two grown-up daughters of the family, the whole family's dejection when the father announces his intentions of moving to New York for business reasons, and their joy when he accedes to their wishes to remain in St. Louis. Around these troubles, considerable footage is given over to incidents involving the different family members, who include Leon Ames, as the father, a hard-working attorney, whose feelings are easily hurt; Mary Astor, as the mother, who understandingly caters to the whims of her five children and of her sulking husband; Lucille Brenner, Judy Garland, and Henry H. Daniels, Jr., as the three older children, each of whom had a romantic problem; Margaret O'Brien, as the youngest child, whose pranks caused the others considerable consternation; Joan Carroll, as her slightly older but equally mischievous sister; Harry Davenport, as the sly but loveable grandfather; and Marjorie Main, as the bossy cook—each performs effectively.

From a production point of view, the backgrounds are lavish and colorful, and the Technicolor photography is a treat to the eye. The musical interludes are delightful, and a few of the songs, particularly "The Trolley Song," sung by Judy Garland, are already national favorites. A song and dance number with Margaret and Judy, and Margaret's adventures on Halloween night, are among the many highlights in the picture.

Irving Brecher and Fred F. Finklehoffe wrote the screen play based on the book by Sally Benson. Arthur Freed produced it, and Vincente Minnelli directed it. The cast includes Tom Drake, Robert Sully, June Lockhart, Chill Wills and others.

"Together Again" with Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer

(Columbia, no release date set; time, 101 min.)

A slightly sophisticated, gay romantic comedy, the sort that should go over very well with the rank and file. The Irene Dunne-Charles Boyer combination is enough to insure good box-office results. The story, which revolves around the romance between an attractive young widow and a suave French sculptor, is rather thin, and the excessive dialogue causes it to drag occasionally; nevertheless, the romantic complications are amusing, and several of the situations should provoke hearty laughter. An amusing twist is given to the story in that the widow's adolescent stepdaughter falls in love with the sculptor, much to the chagrin of her eighteen-year-old boy-friend, who in

turn becomes romantically inclined towards the widow. Mona Freeman and Jerome Courtland, as the youngsters, display unusual talent, and should make a strong impression. The production values are modest:—

Irene Dunne, an attractive widow, who had succeeded her departed husband as Mayor of Brookhaven, is constantly urged by Charles Coburn, her father-in-law, to give up her responsibilities and remarry. When lightning smashes her husband's statue in the town square, Irene goes to New York in search of a sculptor to do a new statue. There she meets and becomes attracted to Charles Boyer, a famous sculptor, and accepts his invitation to dinner at a nightclub. While dining, Irene spills wine on her dress and goes to the ladies room to remove it. A sudden police raid finds her in a state of undress, and she is mistakenly arrested as a "strip-tease" performer. She spends the night in jail under an assumed name and, on the following morning, returns to Brookhaven without seeing Boyer; she felt it best not to see him again lest the incident be found out by the townspeople. Boyer, understanding her fears, follows her to Brookhaven and compromises her into commissioning him to do the statue. Coburn, sensing Irene's infatuation for Boyer, invites him to live at the house. Complications arise when Mona Freeman, Irene's adolescent stepdaughter, becomes infatuated with Boyer, and when Jerome Courtland, Mona's boy-friend, in a jealous mood, proposes to Irene. A farce transpires in which Irene and Boyer pretend that they are in love with the adolescents. Eventually, Irene and Boyer disillusion the youngsters and help them to realize their love for each other. Further complications arise when Charles Dingle, the local newspaper editor and Irene's political enemy, learns of her night in jail and publicizes it. The townspeople, however, refuse to believe the story. When lightning strikes for a second time and destroys the new statue, Irene considers the incident an omen. She gives up her job as Mayor, and agrees to marry Boyer.

F. Hugh Herbert and Virginia Van Upp wrote the screen play. Miss Upp produced it, and Charles Vidor directed it. Unobjectionable morally.

"Mark of the Whistler" with Richard Dix (Columbia, Nov. 2; time, 60 min.)

This second in the "Whistler" series of mystery dramas, based on the popular radio program of the same title, should make a satisfactory supporting feature wherever this type of entertainment is enjoyed. In spite of the fact that the story is not always plausible, and of the fact that its conclusion is somewhat contrived and abrupt, it holds one's attention well, sustaining considerable suspense all the way through. Richard Dix, as the vagrant, whose perpetration of a fraud leads him into a series of difficulties with vengeful persons, gives a good performance, but one is not in sympathy with him for, up until the very end, his actions are unprincipled:—

Richard Dix, a vagrant, learns from a bank's "dormant accounts" notice that it was holding a sum of money for a missing man, whose name was similar to his. Dix decides to assume the man's identity and, after carefully checking his background, goes to the bank to claim the money. The bank, satisfied with his story, gives him \$30,000 in cash. Janis Carter, a woman reporter, learns of the story and secures a photograph of Dix leaving the bank. Trying to avoid

being photographed, Dix bowls over Paul Guilfoyle, a crippled peddler, to whom he gives a liberal tip. Dix's photograph is seen in the papers by John Calvert and Matt Willis, brothers, who had been searching for the man Dix was impersonating; their father, a former partner of the missing man's unscrupulous father, had been railroaded to jail, and the two brothers were determined to avenge him by killing Dix, whom they believed to be the unscrupulous partner's son. Meanwhile Dix caches his money and decides to visit a night-club. Noticing Calvert following him, Dix believes him to be a detective who had found out his fraud. He eludes Calvert and seeks the aid of the crippled peddler, who offers to help him leave town by bus. Calvert, however, traces him to the bus station and compels him to accompany him to his house, where he explains his intentions. Unable to convince Calvert that he was an imposter, Dix escapes and seeks refuge with the crippled peddler, who reveals to him that he is the missing man that he (Dix) had been impersonating. Calvert and Willis catch up with Dix at the peddler's apartment, but both are killed in a gun-fight with the police. Guilfoyle, now unafraid to assume his real identity, offers to help rehabilitate Dix.

George Bricker wrote the screen play, Rudolph C. Flotow produced it, and William Castle directed it. Adult entertainment.

"Dark Waters" with Merle Oberon, Franchot Tone and Thomas Mitchell

(United Artists, no release date set; time, 90 min.)

Patrons who like plenty of chills and thrills in their entertainment should find this psychological murder melodrama satisfactory; but its value to the masses is doubtful, because of the depressing story and atmosphere. The artistic production, the capable direction, and the competent performances, help considerably to maintain one's interest in the unpleasant proceedings, which revolve around the diabolical machinations of four scoundrels, who seek to drive a distraught girl insane in order to gain possession of her missing uncle's plantation. The action takes place in the Louisiana bayou country, which lends itself to the atmosphere of horror. The closing scenes, where the villains are trapped and the girl saved, are dramatic and exciting:—

Victim of a nervous breakdown, Merle Oberon, lone survivor of a torpedoed ship, in which her parents had been killed, is invited by her aunt and uncle, whom she had never seen, to recuperate at their plantation in Louisiana. When no one meets her at the station, Franchot Tone, a local physician, drives Merle to the isolated plantation, where she is greeted by Fay Bainter and John Qualen, her aunt and uncle, Thomas Mitchell, her uncle's business advisor, and Elisha Cook, Jr., lessee of the plantation. Unknown to Merle, or to Tone, who had never met the plantation's owners, the four were a group of imposters who had disposed of her aunt and uncle in a scheme to gain possession of the plantation. Merle's unexpected arrival interfered with their plans. Mitchell, to rid himself of Merle, resorts to numerous tricks designed to convince her that she was losing her mind; he hoped to place her in an institution. Terrorized at first, Merle soon realizes the truth when Miss Bainter reveals herself as an imposter during a conversation about Merle's mother. Merle contacts Tone and asks him to rescue her. But Mitchell, aware that the young couple had found him out, forces them to accompany

him to the swamps where he and Cook intended to drown them. Taking advantage of an unguarded moment, Tone starts a fight with the two men. Cook loses his life in the quicksand, and Mitchell, fearful lest he suffer a similar fate, surrenders. With the scoundrels disposed of, Merle and Tone look forward to a peaceful future on the plantation.

Joan Harrison and Marian Cockrell wrote the screen play from the Saturday Evening Post story by Frank and Marian Cockrell. Benedict Bogeaus produced it, and Andre De Toth directed it. The cast includes Rex Ingram, Odette Myrtil, Nina Mae McKinney and others. Unobjectionable morally.

"Something for the Boys" with Carmen Miranda, Vivian Blaine and Phil Silvers

(20th Century-Fox, November; time, 87 min.)

Based on the Broadway stage show of the same title, this lavish Technicolor musical is fairly diverting if not outstanding. Its real entertainment value lies in the musical interludes, for the story itself is rather dull. Here and there it has situations, some of them slapstick, funny enough to provoke hearty laughter, but on the whole the comedy is only moderately amusing. Phil Silvers works hard and succeeds in enlivening the situations in which he appears, but the rest of the cast is handicapped by the weak material. Musically, the picture is satisfactory; the dances are well-staged, and the songs are pleasant to the ear:—

Carmen Miranda, a carborundum polisher in a defense plant, Vivian Blaine, a night-club singer, and Phil Silvers, a sidewalk salesman, all cousins, meet for the first time when they learn that they are joint heirs to a southern plantation. All go to Georgia, where they discover the plantation and its twenty-room house badly in need of repairs. Disillusioned, and without funds, all three prepare to return to New York. But Sergeant Michael O'Shea, from a camp nearby, persuades them to open the house as a home for soldiers' wives. The soldiers and their wives help redecorate the house. The romance that springs up between Vivian and O'Shea is soon shattered by the arrival of Sheila Ryan, O'Shea's society fiancé, of whom Vivian was unaware. O'Shea tries to explain that he had become engaged to Sheila to better himself in civilian life, and that he did not love her, but Vivian refuses to listen. Meanwhile a secret gambling game started by Silvers in an upstairs room is discovered by the army authorities, causing them to declare the plantation "off limits." During the Blue and Red Army war games, O'Shea leads his platoon to the plantation so that he could speak to Vivian. His attempt to see her delays him long enough to be captured by the Red Army. Confined on his honor to the living room of the house, O'Shea learns that Silvers, by placing a carborundum cap over Carmen's teeth, had turned her into a human radio receiving and sending set. He utilizes Carmen to learn of the Red Army's plans and, after a series of misadventures, in which Vivian and the wives entertain the Red Army staff so as to delay them, the Blue Army, through O'Shea and Carmen, captures the Red Army and wins the games.

Robert Ellis, Helen Logan and Frank Gabrielson wrote the screen play, based on the musical comedy play by Herbert and Dorothy Fields. Irving Starr produced it, and Lewis Seiler directed it. The cast includes Perry Como and others.

WHO IS AFRAID OF TRADESHOWS?

For some time, the heads of the five major distributors who are still tradeshowing their pictures in accordance with the Consent Decree, have complained that exhibitor attendance at these screenings is so sparse that they serve no useful purpose and should, therefore, be eliminated.

In view of the larger companies' antipathy towards trade screenings, this paper was agreeably surprised when PRC announced recently that it would tradeshow at all its exchanges six of its current productions. And even more surprising was the fact that the attendance, particularly in the New York area, exceeded by far the average attendance at most of the tradescreenings sponsored by the larger companies.

HARRISON'S REPORTS is particularly gratified by the good attendance at the PRC tradeshows, first, because it has always been in sympathy with the efforts of the smaller companies to better their positions, and secondly, because support of a company such as PRC will eventually help the subsequent-run exhibitors to lick the artificial product shortage, which has been brought about by extended runs and moveovers in the key centers, where war-time conditions have resulted in an abnormal spending spree on the part of an entertainment-hungry public.

In the March 6, 1943 issue of this paper, in an editorial warning the exhibitors to beware of an artificial product shortage, it was said:

"One method by which the exhibitors can do much to combat the major distributors who hoard product so as to exact higher rentals, is to grant more playdates to the smaller producers, thus encouraging them to better the standard of their product. The adoption of such a policy on the part of the exhibitors will serve to build up these small producers to a point where the majors will recognize in them a definite competitive threat, powerful enough to compel them to change their ways. Moreover, such a policy will make for keener competition between the distributors and, ultimately, the exhibitor will benefit."

In the twenty months that have gone by since that article was written, great changes have taken place. Republic Pictures, for example, announced recently that it will spend from \$17,500,000 to \$20,000,000 on its 1944-45 production schedule. That is more money than was spent by most of the major companies on their production schedules only a few years before the war, and it is a further indication that Republic is headed for a career that will match any of the big companies.

And look at Monogram—so sensational has been its advance that, for the period ending July 1, 1944, it almost doubled its sales for the preceding year, which at that time were the greatest in its history.

The rise made by PRC has been nothing short of phenomenal. The quality of its pictures, either in production or in entertainment values, not only compares favorably with the majority of program pictures produced by all the other major companies, but in many instances far exceeds it. This paper has said before and still continues to say that, dollar for dollar, PRC gets more value into its productions than any of the other companies. And its willingness to tradeshow its pictures to the exhibitors, denotes the confidence it has in its product.

Undoubtedly, the artificial product shortage created by the big companies had much to do with the progress made by the aforementioned companies, because many exhibitors have had to turn to them for product in order to keep their theatres open. Once the exhibitors tested the product of the smaller companies, they found that it had a definite place on their programs. Here was an opportunity for the smaller companies! They needed no second invitation to make the most of it, and to expand to a point where they can now be

considered definite competitive threats to the larger companies. And that is a healthy condition for the business, for, with the return of normal times, the keener competition will keep the major companies on their toes.

Experience has proved that, given a chance, the smaller companies will measure up to the requirements of their customers by constantly improving the quality of their productions. The exhibitors should continue to support them, for the greater they become the less oppressive can the larger companies afford to be.

IT'S NOT THE BRAND — IT'S THE QUALITY

The subject of support for the smaller producers brings to mind a statement made to me a few months ago by an exhibitor friend of mine, who felt wary about booking a picture made by a small company, because he believed that his customers might not patronize his theatre if he were to show a picture produced by a relatively unknown company. I have no idea how many other exhibitors may be laboring under the same impression, but, if there are any among you who feel that way, I might say that such an impression is erroneous.

The trouble with my friend was that he was so close to the picture business that he could not conceive that very few of his patrons paid attention to the names of the companies that made the pictures. I pointed this out to my friend and he decided to make a test. He questioned his patrons on the subject, and only then did he realize that the average moviegoer rarely identifies a picture by the name of the company that made it. He found that they remembered best the names of the stars, and in some instances, also the names of either the producer or director, where the producer or director had already become well known.

To prove to my friend that the name of a manufacturer is, in most cases, either unknown or not readily identified with a particular product, I asked him to name the manufacturers of such widely advertised products as Chesterfield, Camels, Old Gold, and Lucky Strike cigarettes, Chase & Sanborn coffee, numerous soap powders, and other well-known products. In only a few cases was he able to name the manufacturer. Yet when I asked him to name the manufacturer of Simplex projectors, he answered immediately, "International Projector Corporation." He was then convinced that this manufacturer's name came to him easily only because of his proximity to the product.

Within the industry, the names of the different motion picture companies mean something to the exhibitors in accordance with the reputation each company has built for itself. But to the public, with rare exception, these names mean very little. The public's chief interest lies in the entertaining qualities of a picture and, to a great extent, on the popularity of the stars and the reputations of either the producer or the director. Consequently, no exhibitor need fear that his patrons will stay away from his theatre simply because the picture he wants to show has been produced by a company not generally known. Nor should an exhibitor feel confident that the picture of a well-known company will be a draw at the box-office. In the final analysis, it is the entertaining quality of a picture that counts—and some of the smaller companies' pictures would put many a picture produced by the larger companies to shame.

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Now is the Time to Control Theatre Building

In its October 28 issue, *Boxoffice*, under the heading, "Easy Money Talk Stirs a Deluge of 'Building'," reports that, according to information reaching branch managers and film salesmen in Minneapolis, "plenty of new theatre building is in prospect in this territory as soon as priorities are eliminated and material is available. . . ."

The report states that the branch managers and film salesmen have been approached by many persons, most of whom are not now in show business, but who are planning to erect new theatres because "it looks like 'easy money'." These prospective exhibitors, continues the report, "see only the sunny side, the flush patronage during the current wartime boom."

Pointing out that, so far as can be ascertained, at least ten new theatres are in prospect for the Minneapolis neighborhood and suburban area alone, the report states that "one example of the trend's extremity is Waterville, Minn., a town with 1,300 population now having two theatres seating 400 and 300 each, one of them new and beautiful. Nevertheless, an individual is 'talking about' building another theatre in Waterville."

This report from Minneapolis, though inconclusive, seems to reflect a condition that, according to advices reaching my office, is prevalent in many other sections of the country. Having accumulated sizeable "nest eggs" during these lush times, many individuals are shopping around, seeking to invest their money in enterprises that will give them post-war security. A number of them, apparently impressed by the tremendous dollar grosses published in both the daily and trade newspapers, have decided to try the motion picture exhibition field.

A wild scramble by these people to build theatres, without a studied analysis of the number of theatres any given area can absorb, constitutes a serious threat to the orderly conduct of the exhibition business. It goes far beyond being merely a threat in the form of competition from a rival house. Competition in itself is often healthful. This impending condition of overbuilding, however, is a threat, not to any particular theatre or to any particular area; it is a threat to the entire structure of motion picture exhibition. And exhibitors should give some careful study to the problem thus presented.

Prior to the Consent Decree, one of the tactics the major companies resorted to in an effort to compel an exhibitor to pay for his film more money than was profitable for him, was to threaten him with the building of a competitive theatre. At that time, many ex-

hibitors wrote to me asking whether or not there were any towns that had an ordinance limiting the number of theatres. I investigated and learned that there were several towns that had such an ordinance. I obtained copies, and turned them over to a competent attorney for an opinion. He advised me that none of the ordinances would, in his opinion, stand up in court if challenged on the grounds of unconstitutionality, because every one of them limited the number of theatres in accordance with a given number of inhabitants. Their only value, he felt, was that of nuisance.

In a desire to be of service to the exhibitors who had appealed to me, I had this attorney draft a proposed ordinance prescribing the conditions under which new theatres might be erected so as to afford some measure of protection to established exhibitors, particularly in small towns, and at the same time have a better chance if challenged in the courts. After this proposed ordinance had been printed in HARRISON'S REPORTS, exhibitors from all parts of the country asked me for extra copies to be presented to their City Councils for action. Some of these exhibitors later informed me that their City Councils had adopted the proposed ordinance.

The City Council of Winchester, Kentucky, on February 19, 1937, adopted an ordinance, modeled on the proposed ordinance. It reads as follows:

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE OPERATION OF MOTION PICTURE THEATRES AND OTHER SIMILAR PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT WITHIN THE CITY OF WINCHESTER (KY.)

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the City of Winchester in regular session assembled:

1. It shall be unlawful to conduct or operate within the City of Winchester any motion picture theatre, theatre, opera house, or other similar place of public entertainment, without having first obtained a license therefor and paid the tax required under such occupational ordinance or ordinances as may be in effect in said city.

2. No license for a motion picture theatre shall be issued for any building or other enclosure:

- (a) Which is occupied as a tenement house, hotel, lodging house or residence.
- (b) Where paints, varnishes, lacquers or other highly inflammable materials are manufactured, stored or kept for sale.

(Continued on last page)

"Ever Since Venus" with Ina Ray Hutton, Billy Gilbert and Hugh Herbert
(Columbia, Sept. 14; time, 73 min.)

Audiences who are not too exacting in their demands should find this comedy with music a fair program entertainment. The story, though thin and not unusual, is gay, several of the situations being quite comical. The comedy is provoked more by the characterizations and the gags than by the action, with Hugh Herbert and Billy Gleason being responsible for most of the laughs. The music, furnished by Ina Ray Hutton and her orchestra, is tuneful and of the popular variety, with a particular appeal for the younger set. It has a mildly pleasant romance:—

Alan Mowbray, a cosmetic manufacturer, organizes a beauty show and engages Ina Ray Hutton to furnish the music. Ina offers a \$1000 prize for a theme song. Unaware of Ina's offer, Billy Gilbert, a cook and amateur song writer, submits a song to her. Glenda Farrell, Ina's arranger, agrees to give it a trial. Meanwhile Ross Hunter and Fritz Feld, Gilbert's roommates, perfect a new type of lipstick and prepare to market it. Ann Savage, a beauty shop operator, offers to help them and persuades them to enter the beauty show. Their plans are stumped by the \$1000 fee required to enter the show, but they are able to raise the money when Ina selects Gilbert's tune as the theme song of the show. Mowbray, seeking to make matters difficult for the new lipstick, gives them a booth in a remote corner. Despite Mowbray's machinations, however, Thurston Hall, a prominent wholesaler, places a large order for the new lipstick. Realizing that Hunter and his friends were without production facilities, Mowbray tricks them into selling the new lipstick to him. Glenda, learning of the transaction, uses her feminine charms to retrieve the bill of sale from Mowbray. Meanwhile Hugh Herbert, an eccentric but wealthy cosmetic manufacturer, learns about the new firm's difficulties from Ann. When the new lipstick wins first prize at the show, Mowbray demands that it be disqualified on the grounds that the new firm lacked production facilities. Herbert, however, comes to the rescue by offering his plant's facilities to Hunter, thus enabling him to fill Hall's order.

McElbert Moore and Arthur Dreifus wrote the screen play, and Mr. Dreifus directed it. The cast includes Marjorie Gatenos and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Missing Juror" with Jim Bannon and Janis Carter

(Columbia, Nov. 16; time, 67 min.)

A moderately interesting program murder-melodrama. The story is not particularly novel or even logical, and the plot developments are rather obvious; nevertheless, it should prove acceptable to audiences that enjoy this type of melodrama, for it has considerable suspense. There is no mystery, since one is aware from the beginning just who the murderer is. One's interest, therefore, lies in the manner in which the murderer is tracked down by the hero, a newspaperman. Most of the excitement occurs towards the finish, where the hero and the police arrive in the nick of time to save the heroine from becoming the murderer's seventh victim. The direction and the performances are adequate:—

Five people meet violent deaths before Jim Bannon, a newspaperman, realizes that all were former mem-

bers of a jury that had wrongly convicted George Macready of first degree murder. Bannon had proved Macready's innocence, saving him from the chair, but the unfortunate man's experience had driven him insane. Shortly after Macready had been visited in a sanitarium by the elderly foreman of the jury, his room had caught fire and his charred body had been found hanging from a beam. Bannon, positive that some person was intent upon killing the remaining members of the jury, starts an investigation of his own. He meets Janis Carter, an interior decorator, who had been a member of the jury, and learns from her that the elderly foreman was one of her best customers. The strange behaviour of the man causes Bannon to suspect him. The old man cultivates Bannon's friendship and takes him to a Turkish bath. There, he makes a subtle attempt to kill Bannon with live steam. Bannon recovers, fully convinced that the old man was the murderer, but the police and his editor laugh at the story. Bannon's pursuit takes him to the elderly man's country home, where he discovers a sixth ex-juror hanging from a beam. After a series of incidents, in which the body disappears and the local sheriff doubts Bannon's story, Bannon learns that Janis had received a telegram, signed with his name, asking her to meet him at the elderly man's country home. Bannon and the police rush there, arriving in time to kill the old man as he tries to hang Janis. Bannon examines the old man's body and discovers that he had really been Macready, and that the charred body in the sanitarium had been that of the jury foreman. Macready had sought vengeance on the jurors who had condemned him.

Charles O'Neal wrote the screen play, Wallace MacDonald produced it, and Oscar Boetticher, Jr. directed it. The cast includes Jean Stevens, Joseph Crehan, Cliff Clark and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"I Accuse My Parents" with Mary Beth Hughes and Robert Lowell
(PRC, Nov. 4; time, 69 min.)

This latest addition to the cycle of juvenile delinquency pictures follows a trite formula, offering little that is new; at best, it is only mildly interesting program fare, and it will have to depend on the exploitation of its title and subject matter for whatever business it will do. Like the other pictures in the cycle, this one blames the wave of juvenile delinquency on the carelessness and thoughtlessness of parents, who are too preoccupied with their own affairs to pay attention to their children. The story, however, is weak and unbelievable. For example, the romance between Mary Beth Hughes, a mature night-club singer, and Robert Lowell, the seventeen-year-old hero, is far from convincing. Although the story tends to show that the young hero's troubles with the law were due to his parents' neglect, one finds it difficult to sympathize with him because of his display of weak traits. Neither the direction nor the performances are anything to brag about:—

Accused of murder and of complicity in other crimes, Robert Lowell blames his predicament on the neglect of his parents, John Miljan and Vivienne Osborne. He tells the court of how his parents were constantly at odds; of how their interest in him had waned because of their personal pleasures; and of how his mother had embarrassed him on the occasion

of his winning an essay contest by coming to his high school in an intoxicated condition. As a result, he had left school and had obtained employment in a shoe store, where he met Mary Beth Hughes, a night-club entertainer. Both had fallen in love, much to the chagrin of George Meeker, racketeer and night-club owner, who loved Mary. Needing a dupe to transport stolen jewels, Meeker had employed Lowell as an errand boy. Lowell, unaware of the nature of his work, had been grateful for the opportunity to earn extra money so that he could treat Mary in her accustomed style. Lowell had realized the true nature of his work when Meeker had involved him in the killing of a night watchman. He had run home to seek the aid of his parents only to find them away on a holiday. In panic, he had run away to a strange town, where a kindly restaurant owner had befriended him and had induced him to return and clear himself with the police. Upon his return to town, he had visited Meeker to compel him to go to the police. Meeker had threatened him with a gun and, in the scuffle, it had been discharged accidentally, killing the gangster. After hearing Lowell's story, the judge frees him on probation and condemns his parents for their neglect.

Harry Fraser and Marjorie Dudley wrote the screen play, Max Alexander produced it, and Sam Newfield directed it.

Strictly adult entertainment.

"End of the Road" with Edward Norris and John Abbott

(*Republic*, Nov. 10; time, 51 min.)

A fairly interesting program melodrama. Because of its short running time, it should fit in well on a double-bill wherever the main feature is unusually long. The story itself is somewhat far-fetched, but it holds one's interest to a fair degree because of the psychological methods employed by the hero to force a confession out of the murderer. Several of the situations hold one in suspense, and at times the action is quite exciting. The romantic interest seems to be forced and is of little importance to the development of the plot. The direction and the performances are competent: —

Assigned to interview Ted Hecht, convicted for the murder of a young girl in a flower shop, Edward Norris, a crime reporter, becomes convinced of the man's innocence and determines to track down the real criminal instead of writing a lurid story. Jonathan Hale, his editor, angrily discharges him. Norris visits the flower shop, where he observes the dead girl's dog growling at John Abbott, an employee. Using the dog, Norris, unobserved, so unnerves Abbott that he flees to Los Angeles. Norris follows him there, and starts an apparently casual friendship with him in a small restaurant, where Abbott had become friendly with June Story, an attractive waitress. Unemployed, and short of money, Abbott invites Norris to live with him and share expenses. Norris accepts. The young reporter uses many psychological devices to trap Abbott into an admission of the killing, but all fail. As a last resort, Norris stages a fake killing of a boatman when Abbott, June, and himself go on a picnic. When Norris, faking nervousness, prepares to flee town to elude the police, Abbott begs to be taken along. Norris, however, refuses on the grounds that a future argument between them may cause Abbott to betray him. Fearful of a police investigation, Abbott informs

Norris that he need never fear betrayal from him, for he, too, was a murderer. He then recites a full confession of the flower shop murder. As he finishes the speech, Abbott discovers that the police in an adjoining room, had recorded the confession. He makes a desperate effort to escape, but the police and Norris manage to trap him. Hecht's innocence proved, Hale re-employs Norris, giving him a substantial raise in salary. Norris and June marry.

Denison Clift and Gertrude Walker wrote the screen play, and George Blair produced and directed it. The cast includes Pierre Watkin and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Army Wives" with Elyse Knox, Marjorie Rambeau and Rick Vallin

(*Monogram*, Nov. 4; time, 69 min.)

A moderately entertaining comedy drama, with a topical theme, which should get by as a supporting feature with nondiscriminating audiences. The story, which revolves around the disappointments encountered by a prospective bride as she follows her soldier-fiance from camp to camp in the hope that he will be given enough time off to marry her, is rather thin and lacking in originality, and it is somewhat draggy in spots; nevertheless, it has some amusing involvements as a result of the bride's difficulties with war-time travel, the housing shortage, and other problems that present themselves in these times. Rick Vallin and Elyse Knox make a pleasant romantic team, and Marjorie Rambeau, as the buxom Irish mother of six small children, a camp follower herself, provokes considerable laughter by her antics. In the picture's favor is its attractive title:—

Elyse Knox, a young debutante, falls in love with Corporal Rick Vallin, whom she meets at a USO dance, and decides to marry him despite her family's objections. Before they can obtain a wedding license, Vallin leaves for a camp in Kentucky. Elyse follows him there, accompanied by Dorothea Kent, young bride of Murray Alper, Vallin's buddy. En route, the girls become acquainted with Marjorie Rambeau and her brood of six children, who were going to the camp to meet her husband (Eddie Dunn), a sergeant. Vallin meets Elyse at the station, but they are unable to get married because Vallin's outfit had been ordered to leave on maneuvers. In need of a place to sleep, the girls and Miss Rambeau agree to wait on tables in Jimmy Conklin's restaurant in exchange for his living quarters. Vallin and Elyse are thwarted again when he returns from maneuvers and is immediately sent to Chicago. Elyse promises to meet him there. She gets tickets on a plane with the help of the general's wife. In Chicago, the young couple are married by a minister in a taxicab en route to another station, from which Vallin was to catch a troop train for the west coast. He misses the train, but the general's wife fixes matters with the general, who benignly gives the young couple tickets on a faster train, so that Vallin could meet the troop train on the coast. On board the train, a kindly conductor, sympathizing with the newlyweds' desire to be alone, ejects three drunkards from a private compartment and gives it to them.

B. Harrison Orkow wrote the screen play, Lindsley Parsons produced it, and Phil Rosen directed it. The cast includes Ralph Sanford, Emmet Vogan and others.

Morally suitable for all.

- (c) Where rosin, turpentine, hemp, cotton or any other explosives are stored or kept for sale.
- (d) Which is situated within 300 feet of the nearest wall of a building occupied as a school, hospital, garage, theatre, motion picture theatre or other place of public amusement or assembly, or which is within 300 feet of any gasoline supply or service station; provided, however, that renewals of licenses may be granted where the motion picture theatre in question was in operation prior to the opening of such school, hospital, garage, theatre, motion picture theatre or other place of public amusement or assembly, or of such gasoline supply or service station, or has been in continuous operation under a license issued therefor prior to January 1, 1937.

3. It shall be the further duty of all motion picture theatres and houses of amusement to provide adequate "stand-by" or auxiliary lighting equipment capable of supplying ample illumination for lighting said theatres or houses of amusement to the extent to prevent excitement or hysteria as a result of failure of the regular lighting system, said auxiliary lighting equipment being put into use immediately upon the failure of the regular lighting equipment, and it shall be unlawful to leave said theatre or house of amusement in darkness for more than thirty seconds at any one time.

4. Any person, firm or corporation found guilty of violating this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for such offense, and each day the same is violated shall constitute a separate offense.

5. This ordinance shall take effect upon its final passage and publication as required by law.

6. Introduced this February 12, 1937, remained on file one week in its completed form for public inspection, passed and adopted on the 19th day of February, 1937, and then published in The Winchester Sun.

D. B. SCOBEE, Mayor.

Attest:

LINDSAY FAULKNER, City Clerk.

* * *

HARRISON'S REPORTS suggests to the exhibitors that they get busy with their City Councils at once. Perhaps you can induce them to pass a law, patterned after the Winchester ordinance. If you should succeed, it will give to theatre building the aspects of orderliness, reasonableness and common sense.

A LONG-STANDING POLICY THAT NEEDS REITERATION

Because some exhibitors seem to misunderstand the policy of HARRISON'S REPORTS, I thought it would be a good idea if I reiterated that policy.

From time to time a letter reaches this office from an exhibitor asking me to make an attack on a certain company, against which he has a business grievance, or against a sales executive, who outsmarted him in a business deal.

I want to make it clear that HARRISON'S REPORTS cannot be used by an exhibitor to even a score that he has with either a distributor or its sales executives merely to satisfy a personal grievance. If an exhibitor

has been fool-hardy enough to make a bad bargain, he simply has to take his medicine; it is the only way for him to learn his lesson.

The policy of HARRISON'S REPORTS has been and still is to fight for principles or for issues. Whenever a company adopts a policy that tends to affect adversely the interests of the independent exhibitors, this paper will do its utmost to expose such a policy so that the exhibitors will be forewarned, thus giving them an opportunity either to refrain from making a deal, or to take such steps as will be necessary to protect their interests. If a company fails to live up to its promises, such as Columbia in the past few years, this paper will bring it to the attention of the exhibitors. If the contract form used by a distributor should contain "catch" provisions or ambiguous language, or if it should be unreasonably one-sided, this paper will expose it.

But under no circumstances will HARRISON'S REPORTS attack a company or its executives merely because an exhibitor wishes to satisfy a personal grievance, which is devoid of either principles or issues.

GIVE THE BRITISH PRODUCERS A "BREAK"

Representatives of J. Arthur Rank, England's most important film industry leader, have just concluded a five-year distribution deal with United Artists calling for the release of seven pictures made by Rank's producing companies.

These pictures include "Colonel Blimp," "Blithe Spirit," "The Happy Breed," "Caesar and Cleopatra," and "Henry the Fifth," all in color, and "Her Man Gilbey" and "Mr. Emmanuel."

Not having reviewed any of these pictures as yet, HARRISON'S REPORTS is not in a position to pass judgment on their suitability for American audiences. It does wish to say, however, that there is room in the United States for British pictures, particularly with the independent exhibitors, because the large theatre-owning producers, through their existing clearances, are holding back product from the independents, compelling them in many instances to book reissues in order to keep their theatres in operation. And in many cases the rentals for reissues are prohibitive.

HARRISON'S REPORTS hopes that the British producers will make a close study of the tastes of the American public, and that they will select stories that are suited to these tastes.

In a steady series of moves, Mr. Rank, who has the financial resources, has been expanding his production plans. He has lined up top-notch Hollywood producers, directors, authors and stars, with a view towards producing pictures that will be on a par with the best that Hollywood has to offer. To Mr. Rank, and to other British producers, HARRISON'S REPORTS says, "Welcome!" The American exhibitor has no national prejudices; if British pictures will draw money at his box-office, he will book them.

This paper suggests to the independent exhibitors that they encourage the British producers by booking their pictures whenever it is profitable for them to do so, for, in helping the British producers to entrench themselves in the American market, the exhibitors will gain for themselves another source for product, and the American producers will have to toe the line to meet the new competition.

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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No. 47

An Answer to the Directors' Guild Letter

Andrew Marton, a director working for MGM, has sent me the following note:

"Is your answer to Mr. Pichel also your answer to the Screen Directors' Guild's letter?" (Editor's Note: Mr. Pichel's letter, protesting against this paper's series of articles on "Wanton Waste in Production," and my reply to his letter, were reproduced in the October 28 issue.)

I called Mr. Marton up on the telephone to find out what he had in mind. I said to him that, in view of the fact that the exhibitors know that every statement I make in HARRISON'S REPORTS is founded on truthful information, a further reply to the Guild's letter on my part was not necessary. "But," he said, "I am not an exhibitor!" This naturally compels me to comment on that letter.

The fifth paragraph of the Guild's letter to me, which was reproduced in the October 28 issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS, reads as follows:

"This same executive said: 'I have known cases where, in a two-hour picture, the first rough assembly was 150,000 feet. . . .' Mr. Harrison, he means ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY REELS OF FILM! Thousand foot reels. Many, many years ago Von Stroheim made a picture called 'Greed' which was supposed to have run over a hundred reels. We challenge your executive to name one picture since the advent of talking pictures that has run one hundred and fifty thousand feet in rough assembly. He knows 'cases' (plural)—ask him to prove it!"

In the second article on "Wanton Waste in Production," published in the September 16 issue, I stated that, according to a high studio executive of one of the major studios, a director shot six hundred thousand feet of negative on one picture, now, for the picture is just about ready for release. Surely the Directors' Guild should have challenged me on that statement, because this director is accused of having shot four times more negative than the director who shot one hundred and fifty thousand feet. Mr. Marton, who wants me to make a reply to the Directors' Guild letter, knows the name of the director, the title of the picture, and the studio where this picture was shot, and I am sure that, by this time, also most members of the Directors' Guild know it. It is common gossip in Hollywood.

So far as it concerns the challenge to the executive, who has given me the information about the one hundred and fifty thousand feet of negative shot by one director, to name the picture where so much negative was shot, I believe that, to make him name the picture would necessitate the naming also of the director. If this director's name were given and he denied that he had shot so much negative and challenged me to name the executive who gave me the information, I could not reveal his name for the following reason:

Elsewhere in this issue I am reproducing a letter from producer Martin Mooney. In an editorial note I state that Mr. Mooney was an outstanding newspaperman, implying that he quit the newspaper field to engage in production. Perhaps some of you remember Mr. Mooney. But to those of

you who do not, let me say that, in 1935, Mr. Mooney, then working for the *New York American*, was summoned by one of the New York courts to reveal the source of some important information he had printed touching upon a certain case and, when he refused to divulge it, he was found guilty of contempt of court and was sent to the Tombs for a month. In other words, Mr. Mooney preferred to spend thirty days in jail rather than reveal the source of his information.

Perhaps the Directors' Guild are unaware of the fact that newspaper people abide by certain ethics, one of these being that none will reveal the source of his information without the consent of the person who gave him that information. If they knew it, they would not have made the challenge to this executive through me. But this is forgivable.

The members of the Directors' Guild admit in their letter that the exhibitors consider HARRISON'S REPORTS "Biblical" in reliability. How has it gained such a reputation? By being careful of whose information it accepts as authentic. It is a reputation that one has to guard with great care, because it is invaluable. All that I can say then is that I have the utmost faith in the accuracy of the studio executives' statements on which I based the series of three articles on production waste.

What is true of this criticism of the Directors' Guild is true of their other critical comments.

In publishing these facts about production waste my object was to bring that matter out in the open so that those who have been guilty of waste may know that the finger is on them. Knowing it, they will undoubtedly try to mend their ways.

The Screen Directors' Guild knows that some of their members have been guilty of extravagance. The best step that it can take, then, is not to whitewash the guilty members, but to caution them to be more economical, for after all the waste is reflected eventually upon the rentals the motion picture exhibitors have to pay to the distributors.

And what applies to directors, applies with equal force to every other person who is engaged in the business of making motion pictures. If waste in production should be reduced, then my series of articles will have served its purpose.

JIMMY FIDLER'S COMMENT ON WASTE IN PRODUCTION

In one of his columns last week, Mr. Jimmy Fidler, whose column is syndicated in 165 newspapers in the United States, made the following comment:

"HOLLYWOOD—I have followed with keen interest, the quarrel between P. S. 'Pete' Harrison publisher of 'Harrison's Reports' (a reliable trade publication) and the Screen Directors' Guild.

"In a series of effective articles, Harrison accused the directors of 'wanton waste' in production. He made such
(Continued on last page)

"Hi Beautiful" with Martha O'Driscoll and Noah Beery, Jr.

(Universal, Dec. 8; time, 65 min.)

A mediocre romantic comedy, best suited for secondary theatres as the lower of a mid-week double bill. The hackneyed story unfolds without one new twist, and since the action is for the most part slow-moving, one loses interest in the outcome. A few of the situations are amusing, but on the whole the comedy is so forced that it tends to bore instead of amuse the spectator. The players try to make something out of their respective roles, but they cannot overcome the ordinary material and the trite dialogue:—

Reporting for work at the post-war model home over which she presided for a real estate firm, Martha O'Driscoll is shocked to find Noah Beery, Jr., a soldier, sleeping in one of the luxurious beds. Beery talks her out of calling the police, explaining that he could not find another place to sleep. Having the afternoon off, Martha accompanies Beery to an amusement park, where both fall in love. They end their holiday by taking pictures of themselves. When a patent pill company announces over the radio that it will give a \$5000 prize for a photo of the "Happiest G.I. Couple," Beery favors submitting one of the photos taken at the amusement park, but Martha denounces the commercializing of love. Unknown to them, however, Hattie McDaniel, negro servant at the model home, enters one of the photos in the contest, and in a letter describes Martha and Beery as a happily married couple, with twins and a dog. The photo wins the prize, and Walter Catlett, head of the pill company, decides to deliver the prize money himself. Meanwhile Martha, learning about the prize, accuses Beery of sending in the photo against her wishes. Beery, learning the truth from Hattie, determines to collect the money. He tricks Martha into posing as his wife, "rents" two children from a neighbor, and makes it appear as if the model home was his own. After a series of complications, in which Beery manages to overcome Catlett's suspicions, Martha, learning that Hattie had sent in the photograph, agrees to marry Beery immediately in order fulfill the terms of the contest.

Dick Irving Hyland wrote the screen play and produced it, and Leslie Goodwins directed it. The cast includes Tim Ryan, Florence Lake and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Town Went Wild" with Edward Everett Horton, Tom Tully, Jimmy Lydon and Freddie Bartholomew
(PRC, Dec. 15; time, 78 min.)

Very good! It is one of the freshest, most satisfying comedies to have come out of Hollywood in a long time; it should be received very well by all types of audiences either singly or as the top half of a double bill. As a rule, most comedy stories turn out to be pitifully inept when handled by three or more screen play writers, but this one certainly proves to be the exception; Bernard B. Roth, Clarence Greene, and Russell Rouse have done a superb job, not only in their writing of the story, but also in their producing of it. And a good deal of the credit is due Ralph Murphy for his expert direction. The story, which revolves around the twenty-five-year-old feud between the heads of two small-town families, is full of novel twists, moves at a snappy pace, and keeps one laughing all the way

through. The complications that arise when the two feudists learn to their consternation that, owing to a hospital mix-up years previously, each had raised the other's son as his own, are original and extremely comical. The cast does excellent work, making the characters believable and likeable:—

Because of the feud between Edward Everett Horton and Tom Tully, their fathers, Jill Browning, Tully's daughter, and Freddie Bartholomew, Horton's son, do not tell them of their plans to marry. The youngsters persuade Jimmy Lydon, Jill's brother, to help them elope. Bedlam breaks out between the two families when, after Freddie applies at the town hall for a copy of his birth certificate, it is discovered that, twenty years previously, on the day that Freddie and Jimmy had been born, their fathers had quarreled in the hospital and, in the confusion, each had signed the birth certificate for the other's son. The matter is taken to court, where the nurse who had attended the birth of Tully's son testifies that he had a peculiar birthmark on his body. When an examination of the boys reveal that they have identical birthmarks, the judge (Maude Eburne) declares the birth certificates conclusive and orders both boys to switch names and homes. On his first day in the Tully home, Freddie is put to bed with the measles. Meanwhile Jimmy learns that, because Freddie and Jill were now brother and sister, their taking out a marriage license constituted a crime. Lest there be a scandal, Jimmy and Jill confess to the judge, who promises to hush up the matter. But Tully, having learned of the license, decides to break into the town hall to destroy it. He is followed by Horton and the other family members, who sought to stop him lest the whole town learn the secret. Horton and Tully get into a fight and both land in jail. At the trial, both men try to protect their family honor by refusing to reveal why they had broken into the town hall. Just as they are about to be found guilty, Freddie bursts into court and reveals that his birthmark was really the first measles. Their sons' parentage established, and the marriage license declared legal, Horton and Tully renew their feud.

The cast includes Minna Gombell, Ruth Lee, Jimmy Conlin and others.

"Meet Miss Bobby Socks" with Bob Crosby, Lynn Merrick and Louise Erickson
(Columbia, Oct. 12; time, 68 min.)

A moderately amusing program comedy with music, produced on a skimpy budget. Built around that strange breed of youngsters who squeal and shriek whenever they hear their idol sing, the story is rather unimaginative and thin, but it manages to be amusing in spots as a result of the youngsters' antics. It should appeal chiefly to adolescents because of the youthful doings and of the popular music. In addition to Bob Crosby's singing, there are specialty numbers by the Kim Loo Sisters, a harmony trio, and by Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five:—

Honorably discharged from the army after being wounded, Bob Crosby, a "crooner," visits Louise Erickson, who had been writing him sentimental letters, and had promised to help him with his career. Crosby, disappointed to find that Louise is a fifteen-year-old girl, is gratified at the chance to meet Lynn Merrick, her older sister. To further Crosby's career, Louise arranges with her friends to send hundreds of fan letters to a local broadcasting station. As a result, Crosby is given a trial on the radio, and he becomes

an immediate sensation when the youngsters greet his singing with squeals and shrieks. The townspeople, feeling that the youngsters' behaviour needed curbing, decide to make a night-club for them. Meanwhile a romance springs up between Lynn and Crosby, much to the consternation of Louise, who was infatuated with him herself. Having assured her friends that Crosby would bring a big stage show to their night-club's opening, Louise finds herself unable to face them, because Crosby's sponsor, peeved at the youngsters' "swooning" antics, had banned his appearance. But Robert White, Louise's teen-aged boyfriend, saves the occasion by inducing Crosby to attend. At the opening, Crosby credits Louise for his success, and cures her of her adolescent love for him by telling her that he was an "old man" of thirty. Louise turns her affections to Robert, leaving Crosby and Lynn free to continue their romancing.

Muriel Roy Bolton wrote the screen play, Ted Richmond produced it, and Glenn Tryon directed it. The cast includes Howard Freeman, Pierre Watkin and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Enter Arsene Lupin" with Ella Raines,
Charles Korvin and J. Carrol Naish**

(Universal, Nov. 24; time, 72 min.)

A fairly good program crook melodrama, centering around a daring, suave French thief, who endangers himself to protect a young heiress from her murderous aunt and uncle. What the story lacks in plausibility is made up for in romance, suspense, and good comedy situations. Charles Korvin, a newcomer to the screen, has a pleasing Continental personality, the sort that should find favor with women. An amusing characterization is that of an eccentric French detective, played by J. Carrol Naish; the manner in which he and the thief try to outwit each other provokes considerable laughter. The fact that the "Arsene Lupin" characterization is well known should be of help at the box-office:—

On a train bound from Constantinople to Paris, Charles Korvin, an international thief, steals a \$50,000 emerald from Ella Raines, a young heiress, but returns it to her when she becomes frantic. Attracted by Ella's beauty, Korvin follows her to England, where she had gone to live with Gale Sondergaard and Miles Mander, her aunt and uncle. He rents a cottage nearby Mander's estate, and renews his acquaintance with Ella. Meanwhile he commits a series of robberies, causing Scotland Yard to seek the services of J. Carrol Naish, a French detective, who identifies the thefts as the work of Korvin. Subsequent events lead Korvin to suspect that Ella's aunt and uncle meant to kill her to gain possession of the emerald. But before he can take steps to protect her, he is apprehended by Naish. Korvin, however, outwits the detective and escapes. He goes to the estate to steal the emerald, hoping that Ella's life will be safe without it. When Ella catches him stealing the gem, Korvin is compelled to tell her of his fears for her safety. On the following day, Ella becomes convinced of her danger when her aunt and uncle make an unsuccessful attempt on her life. She promises Korvin that she will leave the estate and meet him in Paris. She slips the emerald into his pocket without his knowledge. Hurrying to catch a channel boat, Korvin is caught again by Naish. Through clever

strategem, he almost succeeds in having Naish arrested as a pickpocket, but the detective gains the upper hand when the emerald is found in Korvin's pocket and he charges him with stealing it. En route to Scotland Yard, Korvin dreams of Paris.

Bertram Millhauser wrote the screen play, and Ford Beebe produced and directed it. The cast includes George Dolenz and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" with
Spencer Tracy, Van Johnson and
Robert Walker**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 138 min.)

A thrilling war melodrama, well directed and expertly performed by a fine cast. Based on Captain Ted W. Lawson's widely-read diary, the picture is a stirring account of the Doolittle raid on Tokyo, in which Lawson was one of the participants. Some of the sequences, particularly the one where the bomber planes take off from the deck of the Hornet, are so thrilling that the spectator feels the feverish excitement that grips the fliers themselves. The photography is superb. The scenes depicting the low-level flying of the planes, and the bombing of Tokyo, are very realistic. Woven through the exciting action is the heart-warming attachment between Lawson and his bride of six months. This phase of the picture, though tender, is overdone, serving to make the running time excessively long. Some judicious cutting of the romantic angle would rid the picture of its lagging spots. The agonies suffered by Lawson's crew when their ship crashes on the China coast, and the necessary amputation of Lawson's leg, give the picture some grim moments, which, though true, may prove a bit too strong for many persons who have a loved one on the fighting fronts.

The story begins early in 1942 when the then Lieut. Col. James Doolittle organized a group of volunteer fliers to train for a secret mission. Without revealing to the men the nature of their assignment, Doolittle puts them through an intensive training period. Months later, the men are transferred to the carrier Hornet and, at sea, Doolittle reveals to them that they were to bomb Japan. The fliers are compelled to take off ahead of schedule when Jap ships sight the Hornet. Lawson pilots his plane, the "Ruptured Duck," over Tokyo and, after the crew drops its bombs squarely on the target, speeds toward China, crash-landing on the China coast. The crew of five, severely injured, are rescued by Chinese guerrillas. All suffer horribly on the long, painful trek to Free China, where the guerrillas bring them to a small village. There, missionaries and Chinese doctors care for their wounds. Lawson, badly hurt, suffers a leg amputation. He is flown back to the United States when he regains his strength and, with the kindly aid of Doolittle, is joyously reunited with his bride.

Spencer Tracy, as Doolittle, has a comparatively small role, but he plays it very effectively. Van Johnson, as Lawson, gives a stirring performance. Equally good are Phyllis Thaxter, a newcomer, as Lawson's bride, and Robert Walker, as Lawson's gunner-mechanic. Mervyn LeRoy's direction is impressive.

Dalton Trumbo wrote the screen play, and Sam Zimbalist produced it. The cast includes Robert Mitchum, Don DeFore, Horace McNally, Louis Jean Heydt, Leon Ames and others.

statements as '25 retakes of one scene when three or four were sufficient' and 'directors keep on shooting scenes over and over because raw stock is, in their opinion, cheap' and 'the director wants to dazzle the industry . . . impress the studio head that he is a hard worker.'

"The Screen Directors' Guild has called Harrison, in so many words, a liar. The President of the Guild, Director John Cromwell, attacked the statements of the film paper editor so viciously as to make the reader believe (if he did not know better) that Harrison knew nothing at all about his subject.

"Let me intrude my two cents' worth by saying that while Harrison's arguments and citations should not include ALL directors, the hat certainly fits in many cases. The studios are constantly guilty of wanton waste, not only among the directors but among other branches of this creative art, such as actors who won't study their dialogue and writers who play too many 'night dates' and consequently prepare their scripts with foggy brains.

"If Harrison wants proof of waste (which the Screen Directors' Guild asks him to produce), let him come to me and I'll fill his publication for a year. Furthermore, I think he is on the right track. I've long said that elimination of studio waste would work to the benefit of the theatre owners, who might be able to make a more decent profit if they could buy their pictures computed on efficiency in production."

PRODUCER MARTIN MOONEY ANSWERS THE DIRECTORS GUILD

Hollywood, Cal.

November 11, 1944

Mr. P. S. Harrison
Harrison's Reports
1270 Sixth Ave.
New York 20, N. Y.

Dear Pete:

Harrison's Reports is always good reading. Your articles on "Wanton Waste in Production" and the subsequent objections made by the Screen Directors' Guild were to me especially interesting because I like controversy. Controversy should be encouraged for the reason that it brings out facts.

It is apparent that the Screen Directors' Guild has taken the stand that your criticism of a condition is intended to place the blame for that condition on all directors. Perhaps this biased stand is due to the fact that the director claims the major share of the credit for the success of a picture and is not so eager to share blame for a failure.

As a matter of fact, the average director's importance to the success of a picture is greatly overrated. He is invariably given credit for what the producer, writer, actors, cameraman and even technical crews contribute.

Hollywood well knows that a good picture is the result of proper coordination between the creative, executive and technical contributions. Therefore it is obvious that a bad picture must, of necessity, be the result of loose teamwork, as in baseball, when a shortstop is all thumbs, or an outfielder can't see the sun.

Concerning waste, some statisticians estimate that one-third of every dollar spent in making a picture never shows on the screen, and the annual total for all the pictures made runs into astronomical figures. Now some of this money is spent for unproductive overhead such as executive salaries, stock players, insurance, etc., but a large portion of it can be charged to waste through procrastination, bad judgment and (or) vanity.

When I came to Hollywood 10 years ago, I was awed by the technical mysteries of production, and the "attitudes" of those who held the secrets and refused to distribute knowledge to newcomers. As a newspaperman accustomed to ferreting facts, this was a challenge to me and, after a few years of probing, I discovered that these "attitudes" were nothing more than "phony" fronts to camouflage ignorance and incompetency; that there was actually no "black magic" about making a picture.

However, I don't mean to imply that all my colleagues are ignorant, or incompetent. Many brilliant men and women are engaged in the business of making pictures, and some of the most democratic people in the world are among them.

Nevertheless this does not erase the regrettable fact that, interspersed in the picture business—and too many in high places—are the "phony attitude" boys. These men are, because of their power, responsible for what's wrong with Hollywood.

The purpose of this letter is to prove to you that you can't play ball with "one man"; likewise, you can't make a picture and say that one man "did it." It just can't be done, and no one is more cognizant of this fact than the people in Hollywood who have their feet on the ground. Unfortunately, there will always be some artistic idiots among us who walk "in the clouds" and insist that their genius must never share billing with any one else.

I hope that you will continue to criticize what is wrong with Hollywood and to encourage those who are trying to put the accent on entertainment.

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Martin Mooney

(Editor's Note: Mr. Mooney, who once was an outstanding newspaperman, is now a unit producer for PRC [Producers Releasing Corporation]. Among the many pictures he has produced are "San Quentin," "Bluebeard," and "The Great Mike." He is now producing "Crime, Inc.," and has several pictures on his schedule.)

CLARIFYING AN INADVERTENT OMISSION

Because the Fifth War Loan report of the Motion Picture Industry, issued by the National Committee for that drive, omitted mention of HARRISON'S REPORTS in its extollment of the trade press for its cooperation, I brought this omission to the attention of the Committee. The following reply was sent to me by Mr. Ray Beall, Director of Publicity for the industry's Fifth War Loan drive:

"Dear Pete:

"Your letter to Mr. O'Donnell regarding the omission of the masthead of HARRISON'S REPORTS from the illustration of trade press cooperation in the 5th War Loan report, was referred to me for answer.

"Mr. O'Donnell and the rest of us who served on the National Committee for the 5th War Loan campaign, are certainly not unmindful of the splendid cooperation which you gave us and regret the injustice caused you by this omission. It was certainly unintentional and the blame will have to rest on my shoulders for not checking the art work more carefully.

"Mr. O'Donnell wants you to know that if there is anything we can do to rectify the error which we made, we will be only too happy to do so.

"Again assuring you that the omission was just an honest, human mistake and again regretting that it had to happen to you in view of your splendid and generous contribution to the 5th War Loan campaign, I am

"Sincerely,

(signed) "Ray Beall"

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Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1944

No. 48

SUCH IS FAME!

As most of you will undoubtedly remember, this paper, in its May 13 issue, under the heading, "A Get-Rich-Quick Policy," reproduced a letter signed by Rube Jackter, Columbia's Assistant Sales Manager, in which he called upon the the Columbia branch managers to secure 25% more rental on "Cover Girl," where it had been sold on a flat rental basis, than was obtained on "The More the Merrier" out of their total flat rental situations.

As to the methods to be employed to exact the increased rental out of the exhibitors, Jackter had this to say:

"We are not particularly concerned whether you get this increase in each situation or whether you get it on an overall basis in increased rentals, increased playing time or additional runs in the flat rental situations. Our main interest is that you reach the new quota set up for 'Cover Girl' in the flat rental spots."

Columbia, apparently, did not confine its ruthlessness to the American exhibitors; it seems as if Jackter's instructions were given also to Nick Pery, Columbia's Managing Director in Australia, for here is what the *Australasian Exhibitor*, a leading trade paper in that country, has to say in its September 21 issue, under the title, "Watch this Move":

"Apparently confused by the title, Nick Pery is looking to make a recovery for Columbia through 'Cover Girl.' He wants this one bright spot in an assemblage of ordinaries to sacrifice her attractiveness by luring enough cash from exhibitors to make up the deficits of her less appealing sisters from the same menage.

"Naughty Mr. Pery! . . . he has been endeavoring to persuade exhibitors to negotiate with him for higher rentals for the 'Cover Girl.' But exhibitors refuse to be hoodwinked. They know that flat rentals still remain as they were on the ceiling date and Columbia has neither the right nor power to compel its customers to change from flat rentals to percentage. He may have obtained permission to negotiate—but beyond that he cannot go.

"The executive of the M.P.E.A. (Ed. Note: Motion Picture Exhibitors Association) is watching his moves closely. It has been informed by exhibitors and exhibitor companies that in some cases 'Cover Girl' was included in the contract without any additional increase being sought, and that in other cases it was sold at only a comparatively slight increase in hire.

"It seems to be a case that if an exhibitor wants to be a mug and deny himself the protection that price fixing gave him then Columbia will help him waste his money.

"We strongly advise exhibitors to reject every overture that may be made to induce them to play this picture on percentage where they formerly paid a flat rate and, in the latter case, to remember their right under the price fixing regulation and to turn down any suggestion of excessive hire.

"Act differently and you'll pile up future trouble as well as present difficulty. Columbia owes you a lot, but few of us would hesitate to meet a reasonable proposition from a debtor!"

(Editor's Note: In Australia, the Government has decreed that motion picture rentals, either flat rate or percentage, come within the scope of its price-fixing regulations, and that film rentals must not exceed the prices that were in effect as of April 15, 1942.)

As further evidence of what our Australian friends think of Columbia's dealings, the *Australasian Exhibitor*, in its October 12 issue, recalls that, not many years ago, when Columbia was struggling for a foothold on the Australian market, the Motion Picture Exhibitors Association of New South Wales urged exhibitors to support Columbia because it had announced a sales policy consonant with the views of the Association. "Unfortunately," states this reliable Australian trade paper, "the Columbia of today . . . seems to have forgotten how many exhibitors became clients of one of the weaker exchanges. Emboldened beyond its strength it has set itself out to exploit—with short-sighted selfishness—the goodwill thus created for it by an exhibitor organisation.

"Who will be fools enough to let it get away with that!

" . . . It is commonplace that youngsters love to ape their elders; that kiddies dearly love big brothers to note their bulging biceps but there is grave danger that all that the new boastful Columbia is doing is outgrowing its strength.

"If Columbia persists in trying to negotiate outrageous prices for anything that surprises its own self by looking and behaving something like a real picture then Columbia may find that many exhibitors will be only too glad of an excuse to turn elsewhere for a better and more consistent class of product. And it will be much harder to swing them back a second time!

"The charges that are being levelled against Columbia in America are charges which form the basis of complaints which we have against the Australian branch.

"COLUMBIA DOES NOT KEEP ITS PROMISES!"

"The company issues alluring advertisements extolling its promised new season's product, books up trusting exhibitors, fails to deliver all of the much boosted goods, substitutes others of lesser appeal and then asks, what we deem, outrageous terms for anything that stands out among a mediocre lot.

"When you find a journal like *Harrison's Reports* attacking Columbia's sales policy . . . you are justified in examining your own relationship with and treatment by that organization.

"Well if their own brother American are sick to the teeth with Columbia and its ways, it surely behoves us to 'take a tumble'."

The Australian exhibitors sure have Columbia's number!

"Winged Victory" with Lon McCallister, Edmond O'Brien and Jeanne Crain

(20th Century-Fox, Dec.; time, 130 min.)

As a stage play, "Winged Victory" has been hailed as a memorable tribute to the Army Air Forces. As a picture, it is even more stirring because of the greater scope of the screen. The ambitions of six boys from different parts of the country to become pilots, their experience as they go through basic training and ground schools, and their anxiety for each other, their families, and their sweethearts, have been depicted with such simplicity and acted with such understanding and warmth that the spectator feels keenly their joys and disappointments. The sequences depicting the rigorous training and strenuous tests undergone by the trainees are highly informative, and they make the audience appreciative of the heartbreaks suffered by those who are "washed out" for physical or other reasons. The footage is about equally divided between the training of the fliers and the drama of their personal lives, with both phases being blended so skillfully that the picture is at all times dramatically effective. Its humor is rich, particularly in the scenes where the boys first arrive at camp and are good-naturedly joshed by the trainees already there. Amusing also is a camp show at a South Pacific base, put on by the soldiers themselves. With the exception of the wives, and a few minor roles, all the players are members of the Army Air Forces—the original cast that appeared in the stage play. All perform capably, with high honors going to Sergeant Edmond O'Brien for his very effective portrayal of a co-pilot from Brooklyn. Corporal Mark Daniels, Private Lon McCallister, Corporal Barry Nelson, Corporal Don Taylor, and Corporal Alan Baxter are others playing leading roles. Jeanne Crain, Jo-Carroll Dennison, Jane Ball, and Judy Holliday enact the roles of the wives.

The story opens in a small mid-western town, where three youngsters, having joined the Army Air Forces, eagerly await notices to report. They soon find themselves at a training camp where, after months of gruelling training, some members of their group are "washed out" while others become pilots or navigators. One of the men (Lon McCallister) is killed in a crash, leaving a wife and her unborn child. Ultimately, the men become full-fledged fliers and are assigned to a bomber, which they name "Winged Victory." Following a brief reunion with their wives in San Francisco, they take off for a South Pacific base. There, while defending the base in an air battle, their plane is damaged and one of the crew members wounded. While waiting for the plane to be repaired, one of the fliers learns that his wife had given birth to a son. As he walks to his plane to go another mission, the new father pauses to write a note to his son, telling him of the better world he is fighting for.

Moss Hart wrote the screen play from his own stage play, Darryl F. Zanuck produced it, and George Cukor directed it.

"I'm from Arkansas" with Iris Adrian, Bruce Bennett and El Brendel

(PRC, Oct. 31; time, 68 min.)

This program hillbilly comedy, with mountain music, should find its best reception in theatres that cater to audiences who enjoy this type of humor; others may find it dull. The story, of course, does not make much sense; but this matters little since the individual situations are fairly comical in their own rustic way. There are a few situations in which the action pokes fun at the hillbillies; these may prove amusing to city audiences but small-town patrons may not find them pleasurable. Most of the footage is consumed by the musical interludes, which is just as well, for they make up the most entertaining parts of the picture. El Brendel and Slim Summerville, as hillbilly characters, provide most of the comedy, but not much of it is effective:—

When a sow owned by Maude Eburne of Pitchfork,

Arkansas, establishes a world's record by having a litter of eighteen pigs, the nation's newspapers give it wide publicity. Cliff Nazarro, business manager of a girl show, decides to bring his troupe to Pitchfork, hoping to play to scores of visitors. There, Iris Adrian, leading lady of the show, meets and falls in love with Bruce Bennett, leader of a nationally-known hillbilly band, who was vacationing in town. A town holiday is declared when the Commissioner of Agriculture comes to Pitchfork to bestow a blue ribbon on the sow. Meanwhile two representatives of a meat packing concern discover that a certain mud-hole, in which the prize sow wallowed, contained a very potent chemical that promoted not only health and vigor but also made one prolific. Aware that this chemical could help them corner the hog market, the two men plot to acquire Miss Eburne's property at a low price. Iris, however, learns of their scheme when both men get drunk at a wedding party for Miss Eburne and Slim Summerville. With Bennett's aid, Iris not only thwarts the two schemers from obtaining the property, but she also induces the Governor of the state to sponsor Pitchfork as a health resort.

Marcy Klauber and Joseph Carole wrote the screen play, E. H. Kleinert and Irving Vershel produced it, and Lew Landers directed it. The cast includes Jimmy Wakely, the Pied Pipers, the Sunshine Girls, the Milo Twins and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Blonde Fever" with Philip Dorn and Mary Astor

(MGM, no release date set; time, 69 min.)

This sophisticated comedy has been given a good production, but it is no more than uninteresting program fare, because of weak story material, faulty direction, mediocre acting, and inept dialogue. There is not one new twist in the trite story, which revolves around the infatuation of a middle-aged married man for a young, flirtatious waitress. It progresses according to formula, enabling one to foresee the outcome. And since the characters do nothing to awaken one's sympathy, one loses interest in them. Mary Astor, as the faithful wife who slyly brings her husband to his senses, does the best work of the cast. Philip Dorn, as the philandering husband, walks through the picture with so mournful an expression, and with such an air of self-pity, that he becomes annoying:—

Dorn, owner of an exclusive cafe, finds himself attracted to Gloria Grahame, a nineteen-year-old waitress in his employ. Gloria, engaged to Marshall Thompson, a youth her own age, finds herself fascinated by Dorn's attentions and by his continental manner. Mary Astor, Dorn's wife, aware of his infatuation for Gloria, determines to break up the affair; she persuades Dorn to employ Marshall as a waiter, hoping that a steady income will enable him to marry Gloria. Meanwhile a \$40,000 lottery prize, which Marshall had hoped to win, is won by Dorn, whose financial affairs were in a sorry state. Awed by the money Dorn had won, Gloria redoubles her flirting with him. Dorn, enticed, informs her that he will divorce Mary and marry her. Mary, anticipating his move, offers to divorce him and slyly tricks him into giving her the lottery check in lieu of alimony. On the following morning, Mary, prior to her departure, arranges a farewell breakfast, to which she invites Gloria and informs her of the settlement, adding that she had turned over the check to Marshall as compensation for having lost his girl to Dorn. Gloria, shocked, quickly denounces Dorn and declares her love for Marshall. Dorn, crushed, begs Mary's forgiveness. She then reveals to him that she had given Marshall only \$1,000 to help her cure him of his "blonde fever."

Patricia Coleman wrote the screen play based on a play by Ferenc Molnar. William H. Wright produced it, and Richard Whorf directed it. The cast includes Felix Bressart, Curt Bois, Elisabeth Risdon and others.

Strictly adult entertainment.

"The Thin Man Goes Home" with Myrna Loy and William Powell

(MGM, no release date set; time, 100 min.)

This first in the new "Thin Man" series maintains the high entertaining quality established in the previous pictures, and is sure to please the rank and file. The story combines mystery and comedy cleverly, and it holds one's attention well because of the plot's complexity and of the fact that several persons are suspected, with the guilty one not unmasked until the end. William Powell and Myrna Loy are as engaging as ever in their original roles of detective and wife, putting over their sophisticated type of comedy effectively. Powell is so natural and restrained that whatever he does seems plausible:—

Powell and Myrna return to his home town of Sycamore Springs for a reunion with his parents, Lucille Watson and Dr. Harry Davenport. Powell finds himself drawn into a murder case when Ralph Brooke, a local youth, is shot mysteriously just as he seeks to speak to him. Through Dr. Lloyd Corrigan, an old school chum, Powell learns that Brooke had been a painter of landscapes, which he sold to Donald Meek, owner of a small art shop. Learning that the paintings had been purchased promptly by strangers newly arrived in town, Powell suspects an espionage plot, and believes the paintings concealed plans of a new airplane propeller. As a result of Powell's investigation, suspicion falls on a few of the town's prominent citizens, who threaten to withdraw their financial support for a hospital planned by Powell's father unless he persuaded his son to cease investigating. Davenport refuses to be intimidated. Powell eventually learns that Ann Revere, a mentally unbalanced town character, was the dead youth's mother. Together with Corrigan, he visits the demented woman's shack only to find her murdered. He finds also one of her son's sketches, for which a few of the suspects had been searching. Certain that a few of the suspects were merely accomplices of an important spy in town, Powell summons all connected with the case to a meeting at his home. There, he cleverly tricks Corrigan, his chum, into revealing himself as the head spy.

Robert Riskin and Dwight Taylor wrote the screen play, Everett Riskin produced it, and Richard Thorpe directed it. The cast includes Gloria DeHaven, Helen Vinson, Leon Ames, Edward Brophy, Donald MacBride and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"My Gal Loves Music" with Bob Crosby, Grace McDonald and Betty Kean

(Universal, Dec. 15; time, 63 min.)

An undistinguished but fair enough program comedy with popular music, suitable for theatres that have found this type of entertainment acceptable to their patrons. The story is a thin version of the mature-young-woman-masquerading-as-a-child theme, with little about its treatment that presents anything novel. There are the usual comedy complications brought about by the heroine's disguise, and by her efforts to escape detection. On the whole, however, few of the situations are more than mildly amusing. The music is melodious:—

Grace McDonald and Betty Kean, a sister act, find themselves stranded in a small town when the local sheriff forbids Walter Catlett, a "quack" doctor, to put on a medicine show. Learning that Bob Crosby, secretary to Alan Mowbray, a local manufacturer of vitamin pills, had arranged a children's talent contest, in which the winner would be given a trip to New York and a starring spot on the company's radio program, Catlett and Betty persuade Grace to masquerade as a fourteen-year-old girl and to enter the contest. With Catlett and Betty posing as her aunt and uncle, Grace goes to the audition and wins the contest. Freddie Mercer, a precocious youngster, wins second place and is taken along to New York as an alternate. Grace falls in love with Crosby, but her disguise prevents her from promoting a romance.

She hurdles this problem by meeting Crosby in a nightclub as herself, and by telling him that she was the "child prodigy's" cousin. After a series of mix-ups in which Catlett, Betty and Grace barely escape detection, little Freddie accidentally discovers their hoax and begins to blackmail them under threat of exposure. Eventually, it all ends to everyone's satisfaction, with Grace winning Crosby's love, Betty succeeding romantically with Crosby's employer, and with little Freddie given the star spot on the radio show.

Eugene Conrad wrote the screen play, and Edward Lilley produced and directed it. The cast includes Paulina Carter, a child pianist, Trixie, a female juggler, and Chinita, a rumba dancer.

Unobjectionable morally.

"3 Is a Family" with Charles Ruggles, Marjorie Reynolds and Fay Bainter

A highly amusing domestic comedy-farce. It is the type of entertainment that should go over with the masses pretty well because it deals humorously with family troubles they can understand. There are hilarious comedy situations all the way through, brought about by the confusion that enters the small New York apartment of a middle-aged couple, when their daughter, wife of a serviceman, moves in with twin babies. Topical troubles such as the housing shortage, unruly servants, and the lack of space in maternity hospitals, are interwoven in the story in amusing fashion. The direction and the acting are good, with the performance of the late John Philliber, as an old-fashioned, half-blind family doctor, outstanding. The situations in which he administers aid to one of the twins, and in which he attends the birth of a new baby in the already overcrowded apartment, are extremely laugh-provoking:—

When her husband ((Fred Brady) is transferred to a far-away naval base, Marjorie Reynolds and her twin babies move into the small apartment of her parents, Charles Ruggles and Fay Bainter. Helen Broderick, Ruggles' recalcitrant sister-in-law, who had been living in the apartment ever since he lost her savings years previously in a poor investment, reluctantly moves into the living room so that Marjorie and the babies could have her room. Arthur Lake, Ruggles' son, who resided in the same apartment building with his wife, Jeff Donnell, an expectant mother, also had his troubles; the landlord (Clarence Kolb) did not want children in his building and he refused to renew the lease. Miss Bainter, the family breadwinner (Ruggles hadn't worked for years), decides to buy a large home so that all could live in it. She issues a \$2,500 check—all the money she and Ruggles had in a joint bank account—as a down payment on a house, unaware that Ruggles had invested the money in a defense plant owned by Walter Catlett. Meanwhile conditions in the apartment are in a constant state of confusion; servants refuse to stay because of the babies; a new maid (Hattie McDaniel) becomes intoxicated and disappears temporarily with the twins; and Lake's wife, unable to obtain room in a hospital, has her baby in Ruggles' apartment. And to add to the general confusion, Miss Bainter loses the option on the new house when her check "bounces." Ruggles finally assumes command of the situation when his investment with Catlett turns out profitably, and he is given a job as the plant's personnel manager. He orders his wife to give up her job and take care of the household, and proves to the landlord that, since Lake was entering the army, he could not evict Jeff, because she would be the wife of a serviceman. As all decide that Marjorie and the twins can stay with Jeff, Cheryl Walker, a friend visiting the family, begin to have labor pains.

Harry Chandler and Marjorie J. Pfalzer wrote the screen play from the stage play, "Three's a Family," Sol Lesser produced it, and Edward Ludwig directed it. The cast includes Donna and Elissa Lambertson, William Terry and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

OPERATE YOUR THEATRE ON A SYSTEM

In the February 5, 1938 issue of this paper, there was reproduced from the *Indiana Exhibitor*, house organ of the Associated Theatre Owners of Indiana, an article dealing with the operation of a theatre on a system.

The article pointed out that it was important for the exhibitor to analyze his business periodically so that he would know what he was doing and why he was doing it instead of just guessing as he goes along.

To help the exhibitor operate his theatre profitably, the article suggested that he adhere as close as possible to the following cost schedule in order to keep the different phases of his operations in balance:

Advertising	6%
Film Rental Including Shorts.....	25%
Management and Booking.....	5%
Salaries and Wages.....	20%
Rent	12 to 15%
Heat, Light and Power.....	4%
Taxes	3%
Insurance	2%
Other Expenses	10%
Profit	10%

The aforementioned cost schedule, while it was applicable in 1938, may be outmoded today because, due to war conditions, the cost of the different phases of theatre operation has risen considerably.

An up-to-date method of computing theatre expenses is to be found in a recent bulletin issued by Leo F. Wollcott, president of the Allied-Independent Theatre Owners of Iowa-Nebraska, who cautions his members to determine their actual cost of operations and to buy film accordingly, so as to leave themselves with a reasonable profit. Mr. Wollcott states that few of the smaller exhibitors actually know their overhead costs and are, therefore, buying pictures on the "hit-and-miss system, a very dangerous practice in these days of ever higher film rentals."

To help the owners of small theatres obtain a breakdown of their operational costs, Mr. Wollcott attached to his bulletin a theatre expense form, which, because of its simplicity, is herewith reproduced, in the belief that it will be of great help to our many subscribers who operate small theatres:

THEATRE EXPENSES		
DATE	EXCHANGE	CITY &
PREPARED	AREA	STATE
PERIOD		
COVERED.....	THEATRE.....	
	AVERAGE PER WEEK	
Shorts and News.....	\$	
Supplies		
Social Security and F. O. A. B.....		
Newspaper Advertising.....		
Other Advertising.....		
Light and Power.....		
Heating and Cooling.....		
Supplies		
Film Transportation.....		
Telephone and Telegraph.....		
Repairs, Painting, Etc.....		
Sound Service.....		
Travel		
Contributions		
Rent		
Insurance		
Taxes (excluding income taxes).....		
Depreciation		
Other Expenses.....		
TOTAL EXPENSES.....	\$	
Less Sub-Tenant & Misc.....	\$	
NET EXPENSES.....	\$	

While the form is self-explanatory for the most part, Mr. Wollcott feels that a few of the items may be puzzling. He explains these as follows:

"Salaries"—you and your family, if you work in the theatre, are entitled to take salaries commensurate with what you could earn elsewhere or your living expenses. . . . "Travel"—is figured at 5¢ per mile when on duty for the theatre, visiting exchanges, bill posting, driving for film,

etc. . . . 'Depreciation'—decoration, carpets, sound systems, etc., 5 years; projectors, seats, electrical wiring and equipment, etc., 10 years; and buildings, 20 years."

"When you have gone back through your records far enough to get a clear and accurate estimate of the various items and have entered and totaled them all on the form," continues Mr. Wollcott, "divide the total cost by 10. Then charge two-tenths off for Saturday, three-tenths against Sunday, and one-tenth against each of the other 5 days. Add your feature film rental to the number of tenths due any given picture change and you have the total cost of the operation, which deducted from that gross, gives you the net profit, if any. As an example, we will say your overhead from the form totals \$300 per week, or \$30 per tenth. You pay \$40 for a picture which you run Sunday and Monday. Sunday and Monday take up four-tenths or \$120, plus \$40 for the picture, means you have to gross \$160 to break even. Anything over is profit, anything less of course, is loss."

Mr. Wollcott suggests, and HARRISON'S REPORTS heartily agrees with him, that you fill out one of his forms and keep it on file so that you can use it as a gauge for buying film at prices that will leave you with a deserving profit.

Business prudence requires that you run your theatre on a system. Unless you analyze your overhead expenses periodically, you cannot be sure that the prices you pay for film are within the limits of sound business.

SNEAKY BUSINESS

Under this heading, part of a recent bulletin sent by Allied States Association to its members reads as follows:

"Allied has so often expressed its disgust at the contemptible practice of blind checking theatres, that we thought for awhile there was nothing we could add on the subject. But we have lately come into the possession of the secret instructions issued by a checking concern to its employees which have made us mad all over again. We are not now talking about the checking of percentage engagements by the distributor whose picture is being shown, pursuant to the terms of the exhibition contract. We are talking about the practice of spying on a theatre without contractual authority merely to find out how much business it is doing—or, more accurately speaking, how much it can be soaked on the next deal.

"The degrading nature of the assignment is revealed by the instructions given. 'The point is simply,' say the instructions, 'that absolutely no one either around the theatre or around the town must know that a blind check is being made—now or later. . . . It is bad enough to be discovered and have your presence questioned and possibly your check disrupted, but it is worse to be discovered and never know it. Extra care, ingenuity, and avoidance of suspicion are three essentials in blind checking.'

"Note carefully the following: 'Upon arriving at the theatre . . . locate yourself at some place where you will have a full unobstructed view of the boxoffice and theatre entrance. . . . As the amount of blind checking increases, it is necessary that we be more and more careful. . . . If anyone questions you on what you are doing and you feel an explanation is due the person asking, tell him you are making a traffic check or give him any logical answer according to your best judgment.' In other words, lie your way out!

"Now there is no way by which an exhibitor can tell whether a skulking figure lurking in the shadows is a blind checker or a prospective burglar 'prowling the plant.' And he is under no duty to take any chances by speculating on the subject. When a suspicious figure lurks around the boxoffice, the sensible thing to do is to call on the police to investigate. If the suspect won't explain to the officer then let him explain to the judge. There are laws against vagrancy and justification for the apprehension of suspicious characters."

HARRISON'S REPORTS

Vol. XXVI

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1944

No. 48

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End of the Road—Republic (51 min.).....	183
Enter Arsene Lupin—Universal (72 min.).....	187
Ever Since Venus—Columbia (73 min.).....	182
Faces in the Fog—Republic (71 min.).....	170
Ghost Guns—Monogram (60 min.).....	not reviewed
Girl Rush, The—RKO (66 min.).....	171
Great Mike, The—PRC (71 min.).....	167
Hi' Beautiful—Universal (65 min.).....	186
I Accuse My Parents—PRC (69 min.).....	182
Irish Eyes Are Smiling—20th Century-Fox (90 m.).....	162
Laura—20th Century-Fox (88 min.).....	168
Lights of Old Sante Fe—Republic (78 m.).....	not reviewed
Man in Half Moon Street, The—Paramount (92 m.).....	170
Mark of the Whistler—Columbia (60 min.).....	178
Meet Me in St. Louis—MGM (113 min.).....	178
Meet Miss Bobby Socks—Columbia (68 min.).....	186
Ministry of Fear—Paramount (84 min.).....	172
Missing Juror, The—Columbia (67 min.).....	182
Moonlight and Cactus—Universal (60 min.).....	170
Murder in the Blue Room—Universal (61 min.).....	174
None But the Lonely Heart—RKO (113 min.).....	162
One Body Too Many—Paramount (75 min.).....	172
Princess and the Pirate, The—RKO (94 min.).....	166
Riders of the Sante Fe—Universal (60 m.).....	not reviewed
Shadow of Suspicion—Monogram (68 min.).....	166
Sheriff of Sundown—Republic (56 min.).....	not reviewed
Something for the Boys—20th Century-Fox (87 m.).....	179
Stagecoach to Monterey—Republic (55 min.).....	not reviewed
Strange Affair—Columbia (78 min.).....	167
Swing Hostess—PRC (76 min.).....	163
Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo—MGM (138 min.).....	187
Together Again—Columbia (101 min.).....	178
To Have and Have Not—Warner Bros. (100 min.).....	168
Town Went Wild, The—PRC (78 min.).....	186
Very Thought of You, The—Warner Bros. (99 min.).....	171
Vigilantes of Dodge City—Republic (55 m.).....	not reviewed
Wild Horse Phantom—PRC (56 min.).....	not reviewed
Woman in the Window—RKO (99 min.).....	168

RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR FEATURES

Columbia Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

6201 Cowboy from Lonesome River—Starrett (55 m.).....	Sept. 21
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6016 Strange Affair—Joslyn-Keyes.....	Oct. 5
6028 Meet Miss Bobby Socks—Crosby-Merrick.....	Oct. 12
6021 Shadows in the Night—Baxter-Foch.....	Oct. 19
6035 The Unwritten Code—Neal-Savage.....	Oct. 26
6022 Mark of the Whistler—Dix-Carter.....	Nov. 2
6033 Sergeant Mike—Parks-Bates (reset).....	Nov. 9
6202 Cyclone Prairie Rangers—Starrett (56 m.).....	Nov. 9
6040 The Missing Juror—Carter-Bannon.....	Nov. 16
She's a Sweetheart—Frazee-Parks.....	Dec. 7
Tahiti Nights—O'Brien-Matthews.....	Dec. 14
Saddle Leather Law—Starrett.....	Dec. 21
6003 Together Again—Boyer-Dunne.....	Dec. 22
(Through a typographical error, "Strange Affair" was listed in Partial Index No. 5 as Production No. 5026.)	

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Features

(1540 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 9

501 The Seventh Cross—Tracy-Gurie.....	September
502 Barbary Coast Gent—Beery.....	September
503 Waterloo Bridge—Taylor-Leigh (reissue).....	September
504 Maisie Goes to Reno—Southern-Hodiak.....	September
505 Marriage is a Private Affair—Turner-Craig.....	October
506 Kismet—Dietrich-Colman.....	October
507 Mrs. Parkington—Pidgeon-Garson.....	November
508 Naughty Marietta—MacDonald-Eddy (reissue).....	November
510 An American Romance—Donlevy.....	November
509 Lost in a Harem—Abbott & Costello.....	December
Specials	
500 Dragon Seed—Hepburn-Huston.....	August
(Note: "An American Romance," formerly listed as a special, has been added to Block 9.)	

Monogram Features

(630 Ninth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

408 A Wave, A Wac & A Marine—Youngman (re.).....	Nov. 3
111 Enemy of Women—Drake-Andor (re.).....	Nov. 10
453 Ghost Guns—J. M. Brown (60 m.).....	Nov. 17
413 When Strangers Marry—Jagger-Hunter (re.).....	Nov. 24
Song of the Range—Wakely.....	Dec. 1
421 Crazy Knights—Gilbert-Howard.....	Dec. 8
416 Shadow of Suspicion—Weaver-Cookson (re.).....	Dec. 15
403 Alaska—Taylor-Lindsay.....	Dec. 29
Navajo Trail—J. M. Brown.....	Jan. 5
414 Army Wives—Knox-Rambeau.....	Jan. 12
420 Adventures of Kitty O'Day—Parker-Cookson.....	Jan. 19
The Jade Mask—Sidney Toler.....	Jan. 26

Paramount Features

(1501 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.)

(No national release dates)

Block 1

4401 Rainbow Island—Lamour-Bracken.....	
4402 Till We Meet Again—Milland-Britton.....	
4403 National Barn Dance—Quigley-Heather.....	
4404 Our Hearts Were Young and Gay—Lynn-Russell.....	
4405 Dark Mountain—Lowery-Drew.....	
Block 2	
4406 And Now Tomorrow—Ladd-Young.....	
4407 The Man in Half Moon Street—Asther-Walker.....	
4408 Frenchman's Creek—Fontaine-De Cordova.....	

(Continued on inside page)

- 4409 One Body Too Many—Haley-Parker.....
 4410 Ministry of Fear—Milland-Reynolds.....
 Block 3

Here Comes the Waves—Crosby-Hutton.....
 Dangerous Passage—Lowery-Brooks.....
 For Whom the Bell Tolls—Cooper-Bergman.....
 Practically Yours—Colbert-MacMurray.....
 Double Exposure—Morris-Kelly
 Special

- 4432 Sign of the Cross—Reissue.....

PRC Pictures, Inc. Features

(625 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.)

- 505 Dixie Jamboree—Langford-Kibbee Aug. 15
 509 Swing Hostess—Tilton-Adrian Sept. 8
 551 Gangsters of the Frontier—Texas Rangers
 (56 m.) Sept. 21
 Wild Horse Phantom—Crabbe (56 m.) Oct. 28
 I'm From Arkansas—Bennett-Adrian Oct. 31
 I Accuse My Parents—Hughes-Lowell (re.) Nov. 4
 552 Dead or Alive—Texas Rangers (56 m.) Nov. 9
 Bluebeard—Carradine-Parker (re.) Nov. 11
 The Great Mike—Erwin-Henry (reset) Nov. 15
 513 Castle of Crimes—English-made (reset) Nov. 30
 Rogues Gallery—Jenks-Raymond Dec. 6
 Oath of Vengeance—Crabbe Dec. 9
 The Town Went Wild—Lydon-Bartholomew Dec. 15
 553 Marked for Murder—Texas Rangers Dec. 29
 Hollywood & Vine—Ellison-McKay Jan. 1
 You Can't Stop Romance—O'Brien-Aldrige Jan. 15

Republic Features

(1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.)

1943-44

- 3307 Git Along Little Dogies—Autry (reissue) Oct. 15
 323 Storm Over Lisbon—Ralston-Von Stroheim Oct. 16
 346 Lights of Old Sante Fe—Roy Rogers (78m.) Nov. 6
 3308 Red River Valley—Autry (reissue) Dec. 1
 (More to come)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 3311 Tucson Raiders—Elliott-Hayes (55 m.) May 14
 3312 Marshal of Reno—Elliott-Blake (56 m.) July 2
 461 Silver City Kid—Lane-Stewart (55 m.) July 20
 451 Bordertown Trail—Burnette-Carson (56m.) Aug. 11
 401 Sing, Neighbor, Sing—Taylor-Terry Aug. 12
 3313 San Antonio Kid—Elliott-Stirling (56 m.) Aug. 16
 462 Stagecoach to Monterey—Lane-Stewart
 (55 m.) Sept. 15
 3314 Cheyenne Wildcat—Elliott-Blake (56 m.) Sept. 30
 452 Code of the Prairie—Burnette-Carson (56m.) Oct. 6
 403 My Buddy—Barry-Terry Oct. 12
 463 Sheriff of Sundown—Lane-Stirling (56 m.) Nov. 7
 402 End of the Road—Norris-Abbott Nov. 10
 3315 Vigilantes of Dodge City—Elliott (55 m.) Nov. 15
 404 Faces in the Fog—Withers-Kelly Nov. 30
 453 Firebrands of Arizona—Burnette-Carson Dec. 1

RKO Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

(No National Release Dates)

Block 1

- 501 None But the Lonely Heart—Grant-Barrymore.....
 502 The Master Race—Coulouris-Ridges.....
 503 Tall in the Saddle—Wayne-Raines.....
 504 Goin' to Town—Lum and Abner.....
 505 My Pal, Wolf—Moffett-Esmond.....

Block 2

Farewell My Lovely—Powell-Shirley.....
 Experiment Perilous—Lamar-Brent
 Girl Rush—Carney-Brown
 Nevada—Mitchum-Jeffreys
 Falcon in Hollywood—Conway-Borg.....

Specials

- 551 The Princess and the Pirate—Bob Hope.....
 581 Casanova Brown—Cooper-Wright
 582 Woman in the Window—Bennett-Robinson.....

Twentieth Century-Fox Features

(444 W. 56th St., New York 19, N. Y.)

Block 3

- 506 The Big Noise—Laurel & Hardy.....October
 507 In the Meantime, Darling—Crain-Latimore...October
 508 Irish Eyes Are Smiling—Woolley-Haymes...October
 Block 4

- 509 Laura—Andrews-Tierney November
 510 Something for the Boys—O'Shea-Blaine...November
 511 The Way Ahead—English-made.....November

Block 5

- 512 Winged Victory—McCallister-O'Brien....December
 513 Sunday Dinner for a Soldier—Baxter
 Hodiak December

Special

- 530 Wilson—Knox-Fitzgerald.....

United Artists Features

(729 Seventh Ave., New York 19, N. Y.)

- Since You Went Away—All star cast.....Special
 Dark Waters—Oberon-Tone Nov. 10
 3 Is a Family—Ruggles-Broderick.....Nov. 23
 Guest in the House—Baxter-Bellamy.....Dec. 8
 Tomorrow, the World—March-FieldDec. 29
 I'll Be Seeing You—Rogers-Cotten-Temple.....Jan. 5
 Mr. Emmanuel—English-madeJan. 19

Universal Features

(1270 Sixth Ave., New York 20, N. Y.)

- 9005 Gypsy Wildcat—Montez-HallSept. 1
 9022 Moonlight and Cactus—Andrews Sisters...Sept. 8
 9008 The Merry Monahans—O'Connor-Ryan...Sept. 15
 9019 The Pearl of Death—Rathbone-Bruce.....Sept. 22
 9017 San Diego, I Love You—Allbritton-Hall...Sept. 29
 9030 The Singing Sheriff—Crosby-McKenzie....Oct. 6
 9024 Babes on Swing Street—Ryan-Blyth.....Oct. 13
 9007 The Climax—Foster-KarloffOct. 20
 9072 Bowery to Broadway—Oakie-Montez.....Nov. 3
 9026 Dead Man's Eyes—Chaney-Parker.....Nov. 10
 9081 Riders of the Sante Fe—Rod Cameron
 (60 m.)Nov. 10
 9029 Reckless Age—Gloria Jean.....Nov. 17
 Enter Arsene Lupin—Raines-Korvin.....Nov. 24
 9034 Murder in the Blue Room—McDonald-Cook...Dec. 1
 9031 Hi' Beautiful—O'Driscoll-BeeryDec. 8
 My Gal Loves Music—Crosby-McDonald...Dec. 15
 The Fugitive—Jean-CurtisDec. 22
 9082 The Old Texas Trail—Cameron-Dew.....Dec. 15
 Can't Help Singing—Durbin-PaigeDec. 29
 Night Club Girl—Austin-NorrisJan. 5
 She Gets Her Man—Davis-Errol.....Jan. 12
 Under Western Skies—O'Driscoll-Beery, Jr...Jan. 19
 The Suspect—Laughton-Raines (reset).....Jan. 26

Warner Bros. Features

(321 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y.)

- 401 Janie—Reynolds-Arnold-HardingSept. 2
 402 Crime By Night—Cowan-WymanSept. 9
 403 Arsenic and Old Lace—Grant-Massey.....Sept. 23
 404 The Last Ride—Travis-Lang.....Oct. 7
 405 The Conspirators—Lamarr-HenreidOct. 21
 406 The Very Thought of You—Morgan-Parker...Nov. 11
 407 The Doughgirls—Sheridan-Carson.....Nov. 25
 409 Hollywood Canteen—All star cast.....Dec. 30

SHORT SUBJECT RELEASE SCHEDULE

Columbia—One Reel

- 6951 Kehoe's Marimba Band—Film Vodvil (11m.)...Sept. 1
 6801 K-9 Kadets—Sports (10½ m.)Sept. 8
 6852 Screen Snapshots No. 2 (10 m.)Sept. 22
 6652 Community Sings No. 2 (9 m.)Oct. 12
 6601 Porkuliar Piggy—Li'l Abner (re.) (7 m.)...Oct. 13
 6853 Screen Snapshots No. 3 (10 m.)Oct. 19
 6802 Hedge Hoppers—Sports (formerly "Over
 the Jumps") (9 m.)Oct. 20
 6952 Al Trace's Comedy Band—Film Vodvil
 (11 m.)Oct. 27

- 6653 Community Sings No. 3 (10 m.).....Nov. 10
 6702 As the Fly Flies—Phantasy.....Nov. 17
 6854 Screen Snapshots No. 4 (9½ m.).....Nov. 22
 6803 Aqua-Maids—Sports (9½ m.).....Nov. 24
 6751 Be Patient, Patient—Fox & Crow (re.) (7m).....Nov. 30
 6602 Kickapoo Juice—Li'l Abner.....Dec. 1
 6501 Dog, Cat and Canary—Rhapsody.....Dec. 1
 6654 Community Sings No. 4.....Dec. 1
 6953 Rootin' Tootin' Band—Film Vodvil (11 m.).....Dec. 8
 5657 Christmas Carols—Com. Sings (reissue)
 (10½ m.).....Dec. 8
 6804 Striking Champions—Sports.....Dec. 22

Columbia—Two Reels

- 6425 Wedded Bliss—Billy Gilbert (17 m.).....Aug. 18
 6426 Gold Is Where You Lose It—Clyde (16½m).....Sept. 1
 6401 Gents Without Cents—Stooges (19 m.)....Sept. 22
 6421 Strife of the Party—Vera Vague (16 m.)...Oct. 13
 6120 City of Gold—Black Arrow No. 1 (22 m.)...Oct. 20
 6121 Signal of Fear—Black Arrow No. 2 (15 m.)...Oct. 27
 6427 Open Season for Saps—Howard (18 m.)...Oct. 27
 6428 Design for Loving—Sinatra (21 m.).....Nov. 3
 6122 Seal of Doom—Black Arrow No. 3 (15 m.)...Nov. 3
 6123 Terror of the Bad Lands—Black Arrow No. 4
 (15 m.).....Nov. 10
 6409 A Knight and a Blonde—Herbert (14 m.)...Nov. 17
 6124 Secret of the Vault—Black Arrow No. 5
 (15 m.).....Nov. 17
 6402 No Dough, Boys—Stooges (17 m.).....Nov. 24
 6125 Appointment with Death—Black Arrow No. 6
 (15 m.).....Nov. 24
 6126 Chamber of Horror—Black Arrow No. 7
 (15 m.).....Dec. 1
 6127 The Vanishing Dagger—Black Arrow No. 8
 (15 m.).....Dec. 8
 6128 Escape from Death—Black Arrow No. 9
 (15 m.).....Dec. 15
 6129 The Gold Cache—Black Arrow No. 10
 (15 m.).....Dec. 22
 6130 Curse of the Killer—Black Arrow No. 11
 (15 m.).....Dec. 29
 6131 Test by Torture—Black Arrow No. 12
 (15 m.).....Jan. 5
 6132 Sign of Evil—Black Arrow No. 13 (15 m.)...Jan. 12
 6133 An Indian's Revenge—Black Arrow No. 14
 (15 m.).....Jan. 19
 6134 The Black Arrow Triumphs—Black Arrow No. 15
 (15 m.).....Jan. 26

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—One Reel

- S-576 Sports Quiz—Pete Smith (11 m.).....Sept. 2
 W-538 Bear Raid Warden—Cartoon (7 m.).....Sept. 9
 S-557 Football Thrills of 1943—Pete Smith (8m).....Sept. 23
 M-589 Nostradamus No. 4—Miniature (11 m.)...Sept. 30
 W-539 Big Heel Watha—Cartoon (8 m.).....Oct. 21
 W-540 Puttin' on the Dog—Cartoon (7 m.).....Oct. 28
 K-573 Return from Nowhere—Pass. Par. (10 m.)...Oct. 28
 K-574 A Lady Fights Back—Pass. Par.....Nov. 11

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—Two Reels

1943-44

- X-510 Danger Area—Special Release (22 m.)...Jan. 1944
 (More to come)

Paramount—One Reel

- R4-1 Rhythm on Wheels—Spotlight (10 m.)....Oct. 6
 U4-1 Jasper's Paradise—Puppetoon (9 m.).....Oct. 13
 J4-1 Popular Science No. 1 (10 m.).....Oct. 20
 P4-1 Yankee Doodle Donkey—Noveltoon (7 m.)...Oct. 27
 R4-2 Broncos and Brands—Spotlight (9 m.)....Nov. 3
 L4-1 Unusual Occupations No. 1 (10 m.).....Nov. 10
 D4-1 At the Zoo—Little Lulu (9 m.).....Nov. 17
 Y4-1 As Babies—Speaking of Animals (9½ m.)...Nov. 24
 U4-2 Two Gun Rusty—Puppetoon (7½ m.)....Dec. 1
 E4-1 She-Sick Sailors—Popeye.....Dec. 8
 R4-3 Long Shots or Favorites—Sport. (9 m.)....Dec. 8
 P4-2 Gabriel Churchkitten—Noveltoon.....Dec. 15
 J4-2 Popular Science No. 2.....Dec. 22
 D4-2 Birthday Parties—Little Lulu.....Dec. 29

Paramount—Two Reels

- FF4-1 Bonnie Lassie—Musical Parade (19 m.)...Oct. 6
 FF4-2 Star Bright—Musical Parade (20 m.).....Dec. 15

Republic—Two Reels

1943-44

- 384 Haunted Harbor—Kay Aldrich (15 episodes) .Aug. 26

1944-45

- 481 Zorro's Black Whip—Lewis-Stirling
 (12 episodes).....Dec. 16

RKO—One Reel

- 54101 Springtime for Pluto—Disney (7 m.).....June 23
 54102 The Plastic Inventor—Disney (7 m.).....Sept. 1
 54301 Harness Racers—Sportscope (8½ m.)....Sept. 8
 54201 Flicker Flashbacks No. 1 (10 m.).....Sept. 15
 54104 How to Play Football—Disney (7 m.).....Sept. 15
 54103 First Aiders—Disney (7 m.).....Sept. 22
 54302 School for Dogs—Disney (8 m.).....Oct. 6

RKO—Two Reels

1943-44

- 43111 Brazil Today—This is America (17½ m.) .Aug. 25
 43112 That Men May Live—This is America
 (19 m.).....Sept. 29
 43113 Navy Yard—This is America (16½ m.)...Oct. 20
 (End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 53701 Triple Trouble—Leon Errol (16 m.).....Sept. 1
 53201 Songs of the Colleges—Headliners (15 m.)...Sept. 8
 53401 Go Feather Your Nest—Edgar Kennedy (re.)
 53202 Swing It—Headliners (16 m.).....Oct. 20
 (17 m.).....Oct. 23

Twentieth Century-Fox—One Reel

- 5502 The Two Barbers—Terrytoon (6 m.).....Sept. 1
 5351 Blue Grass Gentleman—Sports (9 m.).....Sept. 15
 5503 Ghost Town—Terrytoon (6½ m.).....Sept. 22
 5253 Mystic India—Adventure (8 m.).....Sept. 29
 5504 Sultan's Birthday—Terrytoon (6½ m.)....Oct. 13
 5901 Sea Food Mamas—Lew Lehr (7½ m.).....Oct. 20
 5505 A Wolf's Tale—Terrytoon (6 m.).....Oct. 27
 5254 Black, Gold and Cactus—Adventure (9 m.)...Nov. 10
 5506 Mighty Mouse at the Circus—Terrytoon
 (7 m.).....Nov. 17
 5255 City of Paradox—Adventure.....Nov. 24
 5507 Gandy's Dream Girl—Terrytoon (7 m.)....Dec. 8
 5352 Trolling for Strikes—Sports.....Dec. 15
 5508 Dear Old Switzerland—Terrytoon (7 m.)...Dec. 22
 5256 Alaskan Grandeur—Adventure (8 m.).....Jan. 5

Twentieth Century-Fox—Two Reels

- Vol. 11 No. 1—Post War Farms—March of Time
 (17 min.).....Sept. 8
 5601 Three Sisters of the Moor—Special (20 m.)...Sept. 8
 Vol. 11 No. 2—What to do with Germany—March of
 Time (18½ m.).....Oct. 6
 Vol. 11 No. 3—Uncle Sam, Mariner—March of
 Time (16 m.).....Nov. 3

Universal—One Reel

- 9231 Abou Ben Boogie—Swing Symphonies (7m).....Sept. 18
 9371 Idol of the Crowd—Per. Odd. (9 m.).....Sept. 18
 9351 From Spruce to Bomber—Var. Views (9 m.)...Sept. 25
 9232 The Beach Nut—Cartune (7 m.).....Oct. 16
 9352 Dogs for Show—Var. Views (9 m.).....Nov. 6
 9233 Ski for Two—Cartune (7 m.).....Nov. 13

Universal—Two Reels

- 9121 Swingtime Holiday—Musical (15 m.).....Sept. 20
 9790 Showdown—Raiders No. 10 (17 m.).....Sept. 26
 9791 The Trail to Torture—Raiders No. 11 (17m).....Oct. 3
 9792 Calling all Buckboards—Raiders No. 12
 (17 m.).....Oct. 10
 9793 Golden Vengeance—Raiders No. 13 (17 m.)...Oct. 17
 9681 The Tragic Crash—Mystery of the River Boat
 No. 1 (17 m.).....Oct. 24

(Continued on last page)

- 9682 The Phantom Killer—River Boat No. 2
(17 m.)Oct. 31
9683 The Flaming Inferno—River Boat No. 3
(17 m.)Nov. 7
9684 The Brink of Doom—River Boat No. 4
(17 m.)Nov. 14
9685 The Highway of Peril—River Boat No. 5
(17 m.)Nov. 21
9122 Harmony Highway—Musical (15 m.).....Nov. 22
9686 The Fatal Plunge—River Boat No. 6 (17m.)..Nov. 28
9687 Toll of the Storm—River Boat No. 7 (17m.)..Dec. 5
9123 On the Mellow Side—Musical (15 m.).....Dec. 6
9688 Break in the Levy—River Boat No. 8 (17m.)..Dec. 12
9112 Lili Marlene—Special (21 m.).....Dec. 13
9689 Trapped in the Quicksand—River Boat No. 9
(17 m.)Dec. 19
9690 Flaming Havoc—River Boat No. 10 (17 m.)..Dec. 20
9691 Electrocuted—River Boat No. 11 (17 m.)...Dec. 27
9692 A Desperate Chance—River Boat No. 12
(17 m.)Jan. 3
9693 The Boomerang—River Boat No. 13 (17 m.)..Jan. 10

Vitaphone—One Reel 1943-44

- 9717 Booby Hatched—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....Oct. 14
9726 The Old Gray Hare—Bugs Bunny (7 m.)...Oct. 28
9512 Champions of the Future—Sports (re.) (7m.)..Nov. 18
9718 Stupid Cupid—Mer. Mel. (7 m.) (re.)....Nov. 25
9719 Stage Door Cartoon—Mer. Mel. (re.) (7m.)..Dec. 30
9720 Odor-able Kitty—Mer. Mel. (7 m.).....Jan. 6
(End of 1943-44 Season)

Beginning of 1944-45 Season

- 1401 Their Dizzy Day—Varieties (10 m.).....Sept. 2
1601 Bob Wills & Texas Playboys—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.)Sept. 2
1301 Let it be Me—Hit Parade (7 m.).....Sept. 16
1302 September in the Rain—Hit Par. (7 m.)....Sept. 30
1402 Ski Whizz—Varieties (10 m.).....Oct. 7
1602 Listen to the Bands—Mel. Mas. (10 m.)....Oct. 7
1303 Sunday Go to Meeting Time—Hit Par. (7m.)..Oct. 28
1603 Harry Owen's Royal Hawaiians—Mel. Mas.
(10 m.)Nov. 4
1403 Outdoor Living—Varieties (10 m.).....Nov. 4
1304 I Love to Singa—Hit Parade (7 m.).....Nov. 18
1604 Sonny Dunham & Orch.—Mel. Mas. (10m.)..Nov. 25
1305 Plenty of Money & You—Hit Par. (7 m.)...Dec. 9
1605 Jammin' the Blues—Mel. Mas. (10 m.)....Dec. 16
1501 California Here We Are—Sports, (re.) (10m.)..Dec. 16
1502 Birds & Beasts Were There—Sports (10 m.)..Dec. 30
1721 Herr Meets Hare—Bugs Bunny (7 m.).....Jan. 13
1503 Glamour in Sports—Sports (10 m.).....Jan. 13
1701 Draftee Daffy—Looney Tune (7 m.).....Jan. 20
1306 Fella with a Fiddle—Hit. Par. (7 m.).....Jan. 20
1722 The Unruly Hare—Bugs Bunny (7 m.).....Jan. 27

Vitaphone—Two Reels

- 1102 Proudly We Serve—Featurette (20 m.)....Sept. 23
1103 Once Over Lightly—Featurette (20 m.)....Oct. 14
1001 Let's Go Fishing—Special (20 m.).....Oct. 21
1104 I Won't Play—Featurette (20 m.).....Nov. 11
1105 Nautical but Nice—Featurette (20 m.)....Dec. 2
1101 I Am An American—Featurette (20 m.)....Dec. 23
1002 Beachhead to Berlin—Special (20 m.).....Jan. 6

NEWSWEEKLY NEW YORK RELEASE DATES

Pathe News

- 55125 Sat. (O) ..Nov. 18
55226 Wed. (E) ..Nov. 22
55127 Sat. (O) ..Nov. 25
55228 Wed. (E) ..Nov. 29
55129 Sat. (O) ..Dec. 2
55230 Wed. (E) ..Dec. 6
55131 Sat. (O) ..Dec. 9
55232 Wed. (E) ..Dec. 13
55133 Sat. (O) ..Dec. 16
55234 Wed. (E) ..Dec. 20
55135 Sat. (O) ..Dec. 23
55236 Wed. (E) ..Dec. 27
55137 Sat. (O) ..Dec. 30
55238 Wed. (E) ..Jan. 3
55139 Sat. (O) ..Jan. 6

Metrotone News

- 220 Thurs (E) ..Nov. 16
221 Tues. (O) ..Nov. 21
222 Thurs. (E) ..Nov. 23
223 Tues. (O) ..Nov. 28
224 Thurs. (E) ..Nov. 30
225 Tues. (O) ..Dec. 5
226 Thurs. (E) ..Dec. 7
227 Tues. (O) ..Dec. 12
228 Thurs. (E) ..Dec. 14
229 Tues. (O) ..Dec. 19
230 Thurs. (E) ..Dec. 21
231 Tues. (O) ..Dec. 26
232 Thurs. (E) ..Dec. 28
233 Tues. (O) ...Jan. 2
234 Thurs. (E) ...Jan. 4

Fox Movietone

- 22 Thurs. (E) ...Nov. 16
23 Tues. (O) ...Nov. 21
24 Thurs. (E) ...Nov. 23
25 Tues. (O) ...Nov. 28
26 Thurs. (E) ...Nov. 30
27 Tues. (O) ...Dec. 5
28 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 7
29 Tues. (O) ...Dec. 12
30 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 14
31 Tues. (O) ...Dec. 19
32 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 21
33 Tues. (O) ...Dec. 26
34 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 28
35 Tues. (O) ...Jan. 2
36 Thurs. (E) ...Jan. 4

Universal

- 347 Fri. (E)Nov. 17
348 Wed. (O) ..Nov. 22
349 Fri. (E)Nov. 24
350 Wed. (O) ..Nov. 29
351 Fri. (E)Dec. 1
352 Wed. (O) ..Dec. 6
353 Fri. (E)Dec. 8
354 Wed. (O) ..Dec. 13
355 Fri. (E)Dec. 15
356 Wed. (O) ..Dec. 20
357 Fri. (E)Dec. 22
358 Wed. (O) ..Dec. 27
359 Fri. (E)Dec. 29
360 Wed. (O) ...Jan. 3
361 Fri. (E)Jan. 5

Paramount News

- 24 Sunday (O) ..Nov. 19
25 Thurs. (E) ...Nov. 23
26 Sunday (O) ..Nov. 26
27 Thurs. (E) ...Nov. 30
28 Sunday (O) ..Dec. 3
29 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 7
30 Sunday (O) ..Dec. 10
31 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 14
32 Sunday (O) ..Dec. 17
33 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 21
34 Sunday (O) ..Dec. 24
35 Thurs. (E) ...Dec. 28
36 Sunday (O) ..Dec. 31
37 Thurs. (E)Jan. 4
38 Sunday (O) ...Jan. 7

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Room 1812

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Vol. XXVI

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1944

No. 49

A LOW BLOW

The opening paragraph of an editorial printed in the November 25 issue of *Boxoffice* reads as follows:

"Coming at this time, the revival by the ITOA of its proposal of a measure for New York State regulation of the motion picture industry, might well be termed a bombshell. It is thrown in the midst of the industry's unified effort to put over the Sixth War Loan. And, strangely, the industry's national chairman of the drive is Harry Brandt, president of the ITOA. Mr. Brandt, it may be recalled, has been one of the outspoken champions of industry unity."

The balance of the editorial takes issue with the Independent Theatre Owners Association for fostering control of the industry through legislation, and suggests as an alternative that exhibitors and distributors should meet on common ground "for action that will lead to a workable program enabling the industry to solve its own problems."

The ITOA's proposed legislation, in the form of an amendment to the New York General Business Law, calling for either a film commission or board that will be endowed with drastic regulatory powers, was treated editorially in the April 15, 1944 issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS, under the heading, "Dynamite!"

HARRISON'S REPORTS had long hoped that the opposing factions within the industry would one day settle their differences without outside interference for the mutual benefit of all concerned, but the continued unwillingness of the producer-distributors to make important concessions finally led this paper to believe that unity could be achieved and that the abuses against the smaller exhibitors could be eliminated only by legislation. The fact that Harry Brandt, who opposed the Neely Bill bitterly, now seeks relief through legislation, is an indication that he, too, has come to the realization that legislative action is necessary.

The purpose of this editorial, however, is not to discuss the relative merits of control of the industry through legislation as against control within the industry itself. It is to point out that *Boxoffice*, by stating that the ITOA's proposal is "thrown in the midst of the industry's unified effort to put over the Sixth War Loan," and by making much of the fact that Harry Brandt, the Sixth War Loan National Chairman, is also president of the ITOA, has committed a regrettable injustice against Brandt and the exhibitor members of his association, in that it has unnecessarily dragged a patriotic note into what is purely an industry dispute.

I have studied carefully the opening paragraph of *Boxoffice's* editorial and, no matter how I read it, I cannot find any logical reason for tying in the Sixth War Loan and Harry Brandt's chairmanship with the proposed legislation. What I do make out of the statement is that *Boxoffice* is trying to tell us that the threat of industry control through legislation is so astounding that the thousands of exhibitors and producer-distributor representatives, who are doing such a magnificent job in the current War Loan drive, might become panicky enough to allow it to interfere with their bond-selling efforts. Accordingly, since the threat is "thrown in the midst of the industry's unified effort to put over the Sixth War Loan," Harry Brandt and the ITOA members, each of whom I am sure is doing his bit in the current drive, have supposedly acted unpatriotically.

What does Harry Brandt's position as chairman of the Sixth War Loan Committee have to do with his private business activities? Does his willingness to devote his time and effort, without monetary compensation, to a great national cause deprive him of his right to protect his business interests? If the members of the ITOA, or any other independent exhibitors for that matter, must not advocate drastic legislative action lest it interfere with the industry's unified war effort, what about the producer-distributors—should they be permitted to continue on their merry way, hampering those exhibitors with their oppressive tactics?

The War Activities Committee, which is composed of outstanding representatives of every branch of the business, is one of the greatest industry organizations in the country for the furtherance of causes that will benefit the national welfare. Each of these representatives, whether identified with exhibition, production, or distribution, has given unstintingly of his time, effort, and money, in a sincere desire to help the country. But have they refrained from taking an active part in the affairs of their particular businesses? Their private business affairs find many of these committee members in constant conflict with one another, yet who can deny that their work as an industry body is an outstanding model of unity? If we are to judge by the Committee's record of accomplishment in obtaining full industry support for the war effort, despite intra-industry disputes, then we may be assured that the ITOA's proposed legislation will not affect in the slightest way the relationship between the Committee members, all of whom proved themselves to be above industry squabbles in matters pertaining to the national good. And for *Boxoffice* to imply that they

(Continued on last page)

**"Belle of the Yukon" with Gypsy Rose Lee,
Randolph Scott, Dinah Shore
and Bob Burns**

(RKO-International, January; time, 85 min.)

In spite of the good production, and of the Technicolor photography, this mixture of melodramatic action, romance, comedy, and music fails to impress on any one count. At best, it is only moderately entertaining, and it will have to depend entirely on the drawing powers of the cast for whatever business it will do. The story, which is satirical of Alaska's gold rush days, is flimsy, and its treatment is ordinary. Moreover, it is lacking in human appeal, and the doings of the principal characters are neither edifying nor sympathy awakening. The comedy, which at times goes semi-slapstick, is forced and, consequently, not too effective. The musical interludes, though not exceptional, are the best parts of the picture. A little more music and less story would have helped matters considerably:—

Arriving in Malemute, Alaska, with her troupe of show girls, Gypsy Rose Lee discovers that the town's foremost citizen and owner of the dance palace was none other than Randolph Scott, her former sweetheart, who had jilted her in Seattle and had absconded with their joint funds. Scott's protestations that he had reformed awaken Gypsy's interest in him. Meanwhile Charles Winninger, manager of the dance palace, tries desperately to break up the romance between Dinah Shore, his daughter, and William Marshall, a young pianist wanted by the Seattle police. With the aid of Bob Burns, a philosophical confidence man, Scott tricks Robert Armstrong, a professional gambler, with a fake weather report, leading him to bet the local miners that the river would freeze by a certain date. The miners ask Scott to establish a bank and to store the gold dust wagered. Learning that the weather report was faked, Armstrong realizes that Scott meant to make off with the gold; he declares himself in on the scheme under threat of exposing Scott. Guinn Williams, the town marshal, backs up Armstrong's threat. Meanwhile Edward Fielding, Marshall's father, a railroad tycoon, arrives in town. He informs his son that the trouble with the police had been cleared up, and he approves his marriage to Dinah. Disillusioned when she learns of Scott's swindling scheme, Gypsy vengefully spreads rumors that the bank is unsound. Williams and Armstrong, working fast, force Scott to give them the gold dust bags. They leave town hastily, unaware that the bags contained sand. The miners, frightened by the rumors, start a run on the bank, but all become reassured when Fielding expresses his faith in Scott and deposits a large sum of money. Delighted to learn that he can make money honestly, Scott resolves to turn over a new leaf. He and Gypsy prepare for their marriage.

James Edward Grant wrote the screen play, and William A. Seiter produced and directed it. The cast includes Florence Bates, Wanda McKay and others.

**"The Falcon in Hollywood" with
Tom Conway**

(RKO, no release date set; time, 68 min.)

This is another in the "Falcon" series, and is about on the same level as the other pictures; that is, a passable program murder-mystery melodrama, with comedy, suitable for those who are not too fussy about a far-fetched plot. Following the usual formula employed in the previous pictures, Tom Conway, as the

"Falcon," becomes involved in a murder and goes about investigating it in his suave manner, much to the annoyance of all concerned, particularly the police, who, as usual, are depicted as being not too bright. Most of the action takes place in a motion picture studio, providing an interesting background:—

Visiting a race track while on vacation in Hollywood, Tom Conway strikes up an acquaintance with Barbara Hale and Rita Corday, two film stars. When Barbara inadvertently walks off with Rita's handbag, Conway, who had learned that she was the ex-sweetheart of Sheldon Leonard, a gangster, follows her to the studio. There, he becomes involved in the mysterious murder of an actor, husband of Jean Brooks, a studio dress designer. Prowling around the studio, Conway learns that the dead man had been working in a picture being produced by John Abbott and directed by Konstantin Shayne. Conway visits the dead man's apartment where he finds a receipt for \$50,000, representing a quarter interest in Abbott's picture. Subsequent events cause Conway to suspect Jean, because she had been unfriendly with her husband and loved Shayne; Rita, because she was Jean's rival for Shayne's love; Shayne, because he had admitted hiding the murder gun in a plaster vase; Abbott, because he owned the murder gun; and Barbara, because she had seriously wounded Shayne with a "prop" gun supposedly loaded with blanks. The shooting of Shayne is followed by the murder of Leonard, who had promised Conway that he would reveal the killer's name. In Leonard's pocket, Conway finds a list of eight people to whom Abbott had sold quarter interests in his picture for \$50,000 each. The list included Jean's husband, Shayne, Leonard, and Rita. Accompanying the police to Abbott's office, Conway proves that the producer had pocketed the investment money and had planned to murder each of the investors. Abbott attempts a getaway, but Conway gives chase and shoots him.

Gerald Geraghty wrote the screen play, Maurice Geraghty produced it, and Gordon Douglas directed it. The cast includes Veda Ann Borg, Emory Parnell, Frank Jenks and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Main Street After Dark" with
Edward Arnold and Selena Royle**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 57 min.)

First of a series of streamlined program features, designed to meet the requirements of double-billing theatres that need a short supporting feature whenever the main picture is unusually long, this is an interest-holding, timely melodrama, centering around the robbing of servicemen by unscrupulous girls and their male confederates. It shows the system used by the police in trapping the criminals, and though the offenders are shown in their pursuits, it is not demoralizing, for they are not glorified; on the contrary, each of the law-breakers pays for his deeds. The closing scenes, in which Edward Arnold, as a detective, apprehends a murderer, are filled with suspense. It moves along at a steady pace, and it is void of comedy:—

Happiness comes to the household of Selena Royle when news comes that Tom Trout, her son, was coming home from prison on parole. Under the guidance of Miss Royle, the entire family, including Dan Duryea, her younger son, Dorothy Morris, her sixteen-year-old daughter, and Audrey Totter, Trout's wife, made their living picking the pockets of service-

men. Detective Edward Arnold, who was aware of the family's criminal activities, keeps an even more watchful eye on them with the return of Trout. Miss Royle, fearing that any unlawful action by Trout would send him back to prison, urges him to seek honest employment. Trout, however, decides to commit big robberies. To prevent the town from being declared out of bounds for servicemen, Arnold begins a drive against the female pickpockets. Given wallets dusted with an invisible powder that glowed under ultra-violet rays, members of the military police visit different cocktail bars and permit themselves to be victimized. Audrey, caught in the drive, manages to get rid of the wallet by giving it to Trout, but the luminous glow of her hands under the ultra-violet ray light reveals her guilt. Meanwhile Trout trails a man carrying a huge sum of money and kills him in an attempted robbery. The luminous powder on the dead man's clothes suggests to Arnold that the murderer had taken part in the pickpocket racket. He ties in this clue with the disappearance of the wallet stolen by Audrey and comes to the conclusion that Trout had committed the crime. At Miss Royle's home, Arnold accuses Trout of the murder and proves his guilt with the ultra-violet ray light, which reveals the tell-tale powder marks on his hands. Miss Royle smashes the lights in a desperate attempt to help her son escape, but Trout is shot dead in the ensuing scuffle.

Karl Kamb and John C. Higgins wrote the screen play, Jerry Bresler produced it, and Edward Cahn directed it. The cast includes Hume Cronyn and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Adventures of Kitty O'Day" with Jean Parker and Peter Cookson

(*Monogram, January 19; time, 64 min.*)

This second of the "Kitty O'Day" program murder-mystery comedies is not equal to the standard set in the first picture; nevertheless, audiences that are not too discriminating should find it fairly diverting. Jean Parker and Peter Cookson are again teamed as self-appointed amateur detectives, whose endeavors to solve a series of murders find them constantly in trouble with the police. Although the story is weak, the action is sprightly and gay. The comedy situations manage to be amusing, despite occasional bursts of slapstick:—

Jean and Cookson, telephone operator and travel clerk, respectively, at the Townley Hotel, become involved in a murder when Jean hears shooting over the telephone. Both investigate and find the body of a man in one of the rooms. Tim Ryan and Ralph Sanford, police officers, arrive on the scene only to find that the body had disappeared. Because Jean and Cookson had reputations as bothersome amateur detectives, the police scoff at their claim that a murder had been committed. Jean, however, determines to solve the mystery. With Cookson's unwilling aid, she locates the body in the hotel's basement. Despite the warning by the police that she keep off the case, Jean continues her own private investigation and, shortly after the first murder, Bill Ruhl, an insurance detective, who had been investigating jewel robberies at the hotel, is found murdered under circumstances that place Jean and Cookson under suspicion. They manage to clear themselves but, soon after, Byron Foulger, the hotel's room clerk, is found murdered, and the young couple again find themselves under suspicion.

Suspecting Bill Forrest, the hotel manager, Jean goes to his room to look for clues. There, Forrest confronts her and is about to kill her when Cookson and the police rush in to the rescue. Jean proves that the first man murdered had been in league with Forrest in the jewel robberies, and that Forrest had killed him during a quarrel. She proves also that Forrest had murdered Ruhl to halt his investigation, and that he had killed Foulger because he had learned who committed the thefts.

Tim Ryan, George Callahan, and Victor Hammond wrote the screen play, Lindsley Parson produced it, and William Beadine directed it. The cast includes Shelton Brooks, Lorna Grey, Dick Elliott, Jan Wiley and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Nothing But Trouble" with Laurel and Hardy

(*MGM, no release date set; time, 69 min.*)

Wherever the Laurel and Hardy brand of humor is still appreciated, this slapstick comedy should prove acceptable program fare. This time the two comedians become innocently involved in a plot to murder a young monarch and, in their usual fumbling way, prevent the youth's untimely death. The story itself is, of course, silly, but it has more human appeal than is generally found in a Laurel and Hardy comedy. The comedians' antics are more or less repetitious of their previous doings, yet they manage to be quite amusing in spots. A cliff-hanging sequence towards the finish is comically effective:—

Stan Laurel, a butler, and Oliver Hardy, a chef, are employed by Mary Boland, a wealthy socialite, to serve at a dinner in honor of David Leland, boy king of a foreign government-in-exile. On the afternoon preceding the dinner, Philip Merivale, the young monarch's evil uncle, who planned to seize the throne, conspires with confederates to kill the boy. The scheme is foiled, however, when the young regent wanders off by himself and joins a group of youngsters playing football. Laurel and Hardy, passing by on a shopping tour, agree to referee the game. After the game, the King, desirous of living like a normal boy, poses as a waif and induces the two men to conceal him in Miss Boland's home. At the dinner, Merivale explains the King's absence by stating that he was indisposed. But when he receives word of the youth's disappearance, he notifies the police. Meanwhile Laurel and Hardy are discharged for serving a poor meal. They take the boy with them to spend the night at a mission, where a vagrant recognizes him as the missing King and notifies the police. Laurel and Hardy are jailed as kidnappers, but the King uses his influence to gain their release. Merivale employs the two men as butler and chef for a reception in the King's honor; he planned to poison the youth and then blame Laurel and Hardy for his death. After a series of incidents, in which the poisoned canape intended for the King becomes lost among the other canapes, the young monarch learns of his uncle's plot. Laurel and Hardy come to his aid, but Merivale covers them with a gun and orders all three to jump from a window high above the street. All are saved when Merivale, nibbling on the poisoned canape, collapses.

Russell Rouse and Ray Golden wrote the screen play, B. F. Zeidman produced it, and Sam Taylor directed it. The cast includes Henry O'Neill and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

might become disunited is decidedly uncomplimentary in view of their achievements.

Harry Brandt and I have often differed on industry issues, and many is the time that I have taken him to task in these columns. And I assure you that I shall continue to differ with Harry whenever he advocates any measures which, in my opinion, is not to the best interests of either the exhibitors, or the industry as a whole.

In the present instance, however, I rise to Harry's defense, not because I favor the legislation he advocates, but merely because I feel that *Boxoffice* has done him an injustice when it pictured him as a disrupter of the industry's unified war effort.

Harry Brandt's war record needs no defense. He has played a leading part in the unification of the industry's war effort, being one of those who, in 1940, helped organize the Motion Picture Committee co-operating for National Defense, which, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, became the War Activities Committee. He has played a major role in the Red Cross Drives and in the previous bond drives. His appointment as National Chairman of the current Sixth War Loan campaign is an honor he has earned. But along with this honor goes hard, relentless, heart-breaking work and responsibility—the sort that taxes one's mind and body to the extreme.

It took self-sacrifice and courage to accept that position and, for his willingness to devote himself to this all-important work, Harry Brandt is deserving of the industry's thanks. He certainly does not rate the back-handed slap taken at him by *Boxoffice*.

ANOTHER DIRECTOR TAKES EXCEPTION

Tay Garnett, prominent Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer director, who has directed, among others, such outstanding pictures as "One Way Passage," "China Seas," "Cheers for Miss Bishop," "Bataan," and the recently released "Mrs. Parkington," has this to say in rebuttal to the series of articles entitled, "Wanton Waste in Production," which appeared in HARRISON'S REPORTS recently:

"In *Harrison's Reports* recently, directors were charged with 'cruel waste' of negative stock, with over-shooting films so that thousands of dollars were left on the cutting room floor, and with generally being prima donnas and wasting money.

"Despite the statements of the anonymous film studio head you quoted, the average film director is highly cost-conscious. It is true that on rare occasions Hollywood produces a director who will film one scene 100 times, but to think such a director is typical is like thinking that Babe Ruth, in his heyday, was typical of ball players.

"Rarely do I ever film a scene more than two or three times—and in this I am not exceptional—although the other day on Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's 'The Valley of Decision,' I had eighteen takes. However, the scene was filmed completely only three times and two of these takes were spoiled by baubles—a player stumbling over a word.

"Of the fifteen takes, five were spoiled by airplane noises; one was spoiled when a steam pipe began to hiss; four were the result of players forgetting lines; two were caused by the camera crew failing to move

in quickly enough on a dolly shot; three were caused by a lock of Gregory Peck's hair falling over one eye.

"Through the years, Hollywood's top flight directors have been those whose picture grosses in relation to picture costs are consistently on the healthy side of the ledger. If these directors were not cost-conscious, their pictures would not consistently make money. The records prove that they do make money regardless of the fact that seldom do directors ever make two consecutive pictures from scripts prepared by the same writers or for the same producers.

"The article also blamed directors for the fact that scripts are almost invariably over-long. Except in the case where the director is also the producer, the director has little or nothing to say regarding the original script length.

"Directors, too, were charged with being inconsiderate of the problems of the cutter. In view of the fact that most 'A' picture directors supervise the final editing of their pictures in close collaboration with the producer, it becomes obvious that the cutter's problems are also the director's problems. A length problem is ultimately the director's as well as the producer's headache.

"In another portion of the article, you propounded your theory that pictures should be 'produced in the script,' and that the director should be merely 'the interpreter of the action that is in the script.'

"When Arthur Rubinstein plays a Chopin nocturne he is only interpreting the notes Chopin wrote down, but my interpretation of the same notes would sound quite different!

"Since the day the bible was first translated, the world's greatest scholars have differed as to the meaning of many biblical phrases.

"Our laws have been phrased so as to remove every possibility of misinterpretation, yet our courts are constantly reversing each other in decisions based solely upon interpretation of the law.

"The analogy is obvious: English is no so easily understood as your theory would seem to indicate.

"If twelve different directors were handed a script and told to direct one scene, there would be twelve different versions as each director faithfully strove to put on film what he understood the scene to be."

A RESOLUTION AGAINST ADVANCED ADMISSION PRICES

If you want an idea of how deeply the public resents the constantly expanding practice of raising admission prices on certain pictures, read the following resolution, which was adopted recently by the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers:

"The State Board of the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers hereby registers its protest against the common habit of raising prices for a really good picture, since prices are not lowered for the poor ones.

"Our desire is that more people should see more good movies and the advance in price automatically decreases the attendance. It is too bad to deprive large numbers of our citizens of the advantage of seeing pictures which could be of great benefit to them.

"We also feel it is not in keeping with the times to raise any prices above the present level."

To this resolution, HARRISON'S REPORTS adds: "Distributors, take heed!"

HARRISON'S REPORTS

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No. 50

A NEW COMPETITIVE THREAT?

In the November 29 issue of *The Exhibitor*, Mel Konecuff, New York editor of that trade paper, states in his weekly column that "commercial motion picture exhibition is now faced with another entrant into the field and a possible potential competitor for the ordinary exhibitor, the night club. So, in the postwar period, in addition to the advent of popular television, which may or may not prove a competitor, depending on how one looks at it, as well as the definite increase in the use of 16 mm. film and projectors in homes, clubs, and schools, the night spot may be considered as an audience capturer."

Konecuff then goes on to describe a room that has been added to the Monte Carlo, a New York nightclub, which has been outfitted with the latest in projection, sound, and air-conditioning equipment. He adds that, "according to one report, 'major distributors are competing with one another to supply film for this "different" night spot,' and we were just wondering what the score is along those lines. Would the distributors provide product for any and all clubs operated along similar lines?"

Mel Konecuff has indeed brought to light a competitive threat that may, if not checked in its early development, have a serious effect on the businesses of many established exhibitors. There is no telling how alarming the competition may become if the presentation of motion picture entertainment should prove desirable to the Monte Carlo's patrons; the idea may be copied, not only by night clubs throughout the country, but also by country clubs and by the local branches of national organizations such as the American Legion, Rotary and Elks Clubs, and others, most of which have entertainment halls of their own.

In view of Konecuff's report that the major distributors are competing with one another to supply product to the Monte Carlo, and since the continuance of such a practice may prove detrimental to the interests of established exhibitors, HARRISON'S REPORTS calls upon the distributors to make their positions clear.

MORE ON OPERATING YOUR THEATRE ON A SYSTEM

A recent editorial of this paper dealing with the operation of a theatre on a system, in which was reproduced a percentage cost schedule of the different phases of theatre operation, as well as a simplified form issued by Leo F. Wolcott, president of the Allied Independent Theatre Owners of Iowa-Nebraska, to help small theatre owners obtain a breakdown of their operational costs, has brought forth from exhibitors a number of letters, the composite substance of which

is contained in the following letter from a Pennsylvania exhibitor:

"The article on page 192 of your November 25, 1944 report entitled OPERATE YOUR THEATRE ON A SYSTEM is very interesting.

"Recognizing that the cost schedule is applicable to 1938, do you have any similar figures reflecting current conditions? It would be sufficient if you were able to give some estimate of current average Film Rental and Profit.

"We presume 'Profit' is before income taxes.

"Do you have a breakdown of 'Film Rental' to features and shorts?

"We wonder whether Mr. Wolcott has any percentage patterns to accompany the form he suggests for analysis of overhead information, and whether he has any idea of current average film rental."

I asked Mr. Wolcott for an answer to these inquiries, and the following is, in part, his reply:

"... regarding the percentage of current average film rental and profit, we, too, recommended the percentage cost of operation back in the early '30s, but we did not achieve the results in individual theatres or from an association standpoint with that system and eventually dropped it for the more comprehensive outline which you printed on November 25. We find this latter system works very well today and the results of any theatre's operations can be easily checked back against the percentage schedule.

"It will be noted that the only item not covered in our theatre expense form of today is feature film rental, for the simple reason this varies so widely from week to week and the form is devised for the purpose of arriving at fair feature rentals. The percentage of the boxoffice dollar which can be paid for film rental will vary according to the number of boxoffice dollars. In other words, 25% was considered fair in the '30s. 27½% or 30% might be considered fair today because of the added business generally during the past year. The ultimate result of all this is, of course, to achieve a fair and substantial net profit for the individual theatre operation and it can not be arbitrarily set up for all the theatres in the country because the war-boom theatres may be able to pay 50% film rental and still retain a handsome profit; whereas there are numerous, small, war-stranded theatres which can not exist at even 20% for film rental. The Indiana percentage analysis will not be far off from the average successful theatre operation today excepting in film rentals, salaries, and perhaps taxes. Some reasonably fixed items such as management, heat, rent, and insurance will be found slightly lower.

"It is a simple matter to arrive at a percentage schedule of the gross when our theatre expense form has been completed. It will be noted income taxes are excluded."

"Destiny" with Alan Curtis and Gloria Jean*(Universal, Dec. 22; time, 65 min.)*

An unusually interesting program picture, revolving around the regeneration of an embittered ex-convict, who, despite his sincere efforts to lead a lawful life, after serving a jail sentence, becomes an innocent participant in a bank robbery, and finds himself hunted by the police. The action varies from fast-moving gangster melodrama, showing how he had become implicated in a life of crime, to the idyllic atmosphere of a backwoods farm, where the fugitive's faith in mankind is resorted to by a blind girl, whose kindness and angelic qualities rid him of his anti-social feelings. Alan Curtis, as the fugitive, and Gloria Jean, as the blind girl, are exceptionally good. Some of the situations are deeply appealing, while others are extremely suspenseful. A dream sequence, in which Curtis' criminal tendencies get the best of him, is very effective:—

Curtis, an honest fellow in search of a job, is influenced by Vivian Austin, a cabaret singer, to work with Frank Fenton, a gangster. Together, they implicate Curtis in a robbery, for which he is given a three year jail term. Released from prison, Curtis determines to go straight, but once again Fenton shrewdly implicates him in a robbery. Curtis flees from the police and seeks refuge in a highway tavern operated by Minna Gombell, who offers to help him. But he catches her telephoning the police, and is compelled to continue his flight. Embittered, Curtis makes his way to a farm house owned by Frank Craven and his blind daughter, Gloria Jean. Curtis accepts shelter for the night, but, having lost his faith in every one, plans to leave on the following day. Gloria, sensing that Curtis was in trouble, asks him to remain and help her father with the farm work. He accepts the offer reluctantly, but with the passing days Gloria's kindness and her faith in him rid him of the impulse to do wrong. When Craven accidentally shoots himself, Gloria pleads with Curtis to take him to a doctor in town. Realizing that it will mean his capture, Curtis agrees. In town, the police recognize and arrest him, but they release him when word arrives that Fenton had been apprehended and had confessed to the robbery, exonerating Curtis. Jubilant, Curtis returns with Gloria and her father to the farm.

Roy Chanslor and Ernest Pascal wrote the screen play, Roy William Neill produced it, and Reginald Le Borg directed it. The cast includes Grace McDonald and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Experiment Perilous" with Hedy Lamarr, George Brent and Paul Lukas*(RKO, no release date set; time, 91 min.)*

A well produced, fairly interesting psychological melodrama. But it is entertainment mostly for class audiences. The rank-and-file will find little appeal in its subject matter, which deals with the machinations of a maniacal murderer, who, through subtle suggestion, tries to convince his wife that she is mentally unbalanced. Moreover, the story is so involved that many patrons may find it difficult to follow. There is considerable suspense in some of the situations, particularly in the closing scenes, where the husband tries to kill both his wife and a doctor, who had come to her aid. As far as box-office results are concerned, the popularity of the stars and of the novel may attract many people, but it will not receive extensive advertising from those who will see it:—

On a train bound for New York, George Brent, a doctor, meets Olive Blakeney, a talkative elderly spinster, who tells him that she was going to visit Hedy Lamarr, wife of Paul Lukas, her brother, a philanthropist. Later that night at a party, Brent overhears that Miss Blakeney had died of a heart attack soon after reaching Lukas' home. Suspicious, Brent arranges through Albert Dekker, a friend, to visit Lukas' home for tea. There, Brent finds himself attracted to

Hedy but is disturbed when Lukas takes him aside and insinuates that she was mentally unsound. On the following day, Lukas visits Brent's office to discuss Hedy's mental state. Finding Lukas' statements contrary to many things Miss Blakeney had told him on the train, Brent becomes convinced that the man was lying. Through Miss Blakeney's diary, which had become mixed with his luggage, Brent learns that Hedy was afraid of Lukas because of an indiscretion she had committed a few years back with a young poet, who was later found dead. In love with Hedy, and fearing for her life, Brent arranges to move her and her young son to a place of safety. Lukas, learning of the plan, traps Brent in his (Lukas') home, and informs him that the house was filled with gas and would soon explode. Meanwhile he confesses the murders of the young poet and his sister. Brent attacks the deranged man and manages to save Hedy and her son before the explosion which kills Lukas.

Warren Duff wrote the screen play and produced it. Jacques Tourneur directed it. Robert Fellows was executive producer.

"Farewell My Lovely" with Dick Powell, Claire Trevor and Anne Shirley*(RKO, no release date set; time, 96 min.)*

A good murder mystery melodrama; it should do better than average business. The story, told in a series of flash-backs, revolves around a luckless private detective, who becomes involved in a number of perplexing adventures, including a murder, when an ex-convict employs him to find his former sweetheart. The chief fault with the story is that it depends too much on dialogue to explain the motivation of the different characters; consequently, unless the spectator plays close attention, parts of the action are puzzling. Aside from its talky moments, however, the picture moves at a brisk pace, and there is considerable suspense and some comedy. One's interest is held all the way through since the mystery is not cleared up until the finish:—

Dick Powell, a private detective, is visited by Mike Mazurki, an ex-convict, who hires him to find his ex-sweetheart. Shortly after, Douglas Walton, a man-about-town, asks Powell to accompany him to buy back a jade necklace from some thieves, who had stolen it from Claire Trevor, beautiful young wife of Miles Mander, elderly millionaire. Arriving at the appointed place, Powell is knocked unconscious, and Walton is murdered. Powell's investigation brings him to Mander's home, where Anne Shirley, Mander's daughter, offers to pay him to stop his investigation. Powell refuses and, through Claire, learns that Otto Kruger, a "quack" psychiatrist, had been trying to blackmail her lest he tell her husband of her past. Kruger, learning of Powell's interest in his activities, informs Mazurki that he can make Powell reveal the whereabouts of his girl-friend if he will bring him to his (Kruger's) apartment. Mazurki forces Powell to go to Kruger, who beats him severely before he escapes. After a series of incidents in which Mazurki kills Kruger for fooling him. Powell obtains evidence that Claire herself was Mazurki's former sweetheart. He arranges a meeting with Claire at her beach house, where he pretends to enjoy her lov-making and tricks her into admitting that she was the ex-convict's former girl-friend, that her jade necklace had not been stolen, and that she had killed Walton because she had tired of him. Realizing that she had been tricked, Claire tries to shoot Powell, but just then Mander, distressed by Claire's infidelities, enters the room and shoots her down. Mazurki bursts into the room and advances on Mander for killing Claire; Mander shoots him and then kills himself. It ends with Powell and Anne looking forward to a new future.

John Paxton wrote the screen play, Adrian Scott produced it, and Edward Dmytryk directed it.

Strictly adult entertainment.

**"Sunday Dinner for a Soldier" with
Anne Baxter, John Hodiak and
Charles Winninger**

(20th Century-Fox, December; time, 86 min.)

A very appealing comedy-drama, revolving around a poverty-stricken family, living on a houseboat in Florida, which decides to do its share in the war effort by inviting a soldier to Sunday dinner. The story, though simple, has been told in a heart-warming manner. The difficulties encountered by the family in obtaining sufficient food, and the general excitement that prevails as they prepare eagerly for the soldier's visit, give the proceedings moments that are tenderly touching and, at times, highly hilarious. All the players perform very well. The romantic interest is pleasing. It is the sort of picture that leaves one with a pleasant feeling, for all the characters are sympathetic:—

Living on a ramshackle houseboat anchored in a lagoon, Charles Winninger, a shiftless but kindly old man, lives happily with his four grandchildren, Anne Baxter, Connie Marshal, Billy Cummings, and Bobby Driscoll. Though the family was poor, Anne, who managed the household, insists upon inviting a soldier to Sunday dinner just like her prosperous neighbors. Winninger goes to town and files an application with the USO to send a soldier, but the application is destroyed by Anne Revere, a prosperous, middle-aged neighbor, during a fit of pique over Winninger's refusal to pay attention to her. Unaware of this, the family prepares to welcome the soldier. On Sunday, all wait impatiently for their guest, and are saddened considerably by his failure to arrive. The children seeing a soldier (John Hodiak) walking on the beach, rush to greet him. Though puzzled by their references to dinner, Hodiak, who had just happened by, gracefully accepts the invitation. He is welcomed into the household and soon becomes one of the family. Never having had a home life of his own, Hodiak enjoys himself immensely. Following a day full of laughter, in which Hodiak and Anne fall in love, the soldier leaves for the fighting fronts, happy in the thought that he now had a "family," and a girl, too.

Wanda Tuchock and Melvin Levy wrote the screen play, Walter Morosco produced it, and Lloyd Bacon directed it. The cast includes Chill Wills, Jane Darwell and others.

**"Guest in the House" with Anne Baxter,
Ralph Bellamy and Ruth Warwick**

(United Artists, Dec. 8, time, 117 min.)

Adapted from the Broadway stage play of the same title, this is a well produced, intelligently directed psychological drama, the sort that may be received better in large cities than in small towns. The story, which deals with the anguish and dissension brought into a gay household by a sweet-faced, treacherous neurotic, is somewhat over-long, nevertheless, it holds one's attention fairly well. Anne Baxter, as the malicious invalid, is properly hateful as she shrewdly disrupts the family that had been kind to her, but at times she overacts, making her maliciousness too obvious. Ralph Bellamy and Ruth Warwick are first-rate as the married couple who befriend Anne only to find themselves estranged by her villainy. A few of the situations are on the sexy side, but they have been handled in good taste:—

Scott McKay, a young doctor, brings Anne Baxter, his fiancée, to the home of Ralph Bellamy, his brother, to recuperate from a nervous breakdown. Bellamy, an artist, lived happily with his wife (Ruth Warwick) and child (Connie Laird), and an aunt (Aline MacMahon). Anne, an outwardly kind person, is welcomed by the family. Soon after her arrival, Anne cunningly begins to disrupt the servants. When Bellamy, seeking to encourage her recovery, tells her that he sees in her the possibilities of a physically beautiful woman, Anne becomes infatuated with him. She determines to become well, and schemes to sup-

plant Marie McDonald, his model, as well as Ruth, his wife. She craftily sows suspicion among the different members of the household, leading them to believe that Bellamy and his model were having an affair. As a result, the model leaves, the servants quit their jobs, little Connie acquires neurotic tendencies, and finally Ruth and Bellamy become estranged. Anne soon finds herself sole possessor of the broken home and openly declares her love for Bellamy. Realizing that the family's troubles were caused by Anne's machinations, Bellamy orders her to leave. He warns his brother of her viciousness, but McKay, hopelessly in love with Anne, still offers to marry her. The aunt, determined not to let the evil girl ruin her nephew's life, plays upon Anne's neuroticism by telling her that a bird was flying around the room. Anne, easily terrorized by the fluttering wings of a bird, flees from the house, losing her life in a fall from a high cliff.

Ketti Frings wrote the screen play, Hunt Stromberg produced it, and John Brahm directed it. The cast includes Jerome Cowan, Percy Kilbride, Margaret Hamilton and others.

**"National Velvet" with Mickey Rooney
and Elizabeth Taylor**

(MGM, no release date set; time, 125 min.)

Excellent! It is a heart-warming human interest drama, superbly produced in Technicolor; it will undoubtedly be a top box-office success, for it is the sort of picture that will appeal to all types of audiences. The story, which takes place in pre-war England, is a tender tale revolving around an eleven-year-old girl and a dispirited former jockey, whose reformation is brought about by their mutual love for a thoroughbred horse. The circumstances under which the girl enters the horse in the Grand National Sweepstakes, and the turn of events that find her riding the horse to victory in England's greatest race, is told with warmth, understanding, and even credibility. The race itself is one of the most thrilling ever seen on the screen, and MGM's faithful reproduction of the Grand National course is an outstanding piece of work. The English countryside, enhanced by Technicolor photography, is a delight to the eye. Elizabeth Taylor, as the young girl, is excellent, and Mickey Rooney, as the homeless jockey, handles his difficult role very well. Anne Revere and Donald Crisp, as Elizabeth's understanding parents, and Jackie Jenkins, Rita Quigley, and Angela Lansbury, as Elizabeth's brother and sisters, give capable support. The family scenes are delightful, with little Jackie Jenkins, of "Human Comedy" fame, providing most of the laughs:—

Rooney, a shrewd, homeless boy of seventeen, is befriended by Elizabeth's parents, who give him a job in their butcher shop. Rooney plans to steal money from the family and to run away, but Elizabeth's faith in him restrains him. When Reginald Owen, a neighbor, raffles off an unman-ageable horse, Elizabeth, who loved horses, wins the animal. When the girl expresses a desire to enter the horse in the Grand National Sweepstakes, Rooney and her father deem the idea fantastic, but her mother understandingly provides the entry fee. For months, the two youngsters work hard training the animal. On the night before the race, Elizabeth's jockey expresses doubt that her horse will win. Angry, Elizabeth refuses to let him ride. She disguises herself as a boy and decides to ride the horse herself. She wins the gruelling race, slipping out of the saddle in a dead faint just as she crosses the finish line. When her identity is discovered in the field hospital, her horse is disqualified. Despite the loss of the purse, Elizabeth and Rooney return home, content that their horse had proved itself a champion.

Theodore Reeves and Helen Duetsch wrote the screen play from the novel by Enid Bagnold, Pando S. Berman produced it, and Clarence Brown directed it. The cast includes Arthur Treacher and others.

**"Night Club Girl" with Vivian Austin,
Edward Norris and Billy Dunn**
(Universal, January 5; time, 61 min.)

Just a minor program comedy with music. The story is hackneyed and the production values are ordinary. Moreover, the players lack box-office drawing power. The musical numbers, which are of the popular variety, are its main attractions, but even these present nothing unusual and they are not enough to hold one's interest throughout. In addition to the singing and dancing of Vivian Austin and Billy Dunn, others doing specialty numbers include the Delta Rhythm Boys, a colored quartet, the Mulcays, an harmonica team, Judy Clark, a "Betty Hutton" type of singer, and Paula Drake, a "torch" singer:—

With the help of their home town chamber of commerce, Vivian Austin and Billy Dunn, sister and brother, go to Hollywood to seek fame and fortune with their song-and-dance act. In Hollywood, they soon find themselves broke and hungry. Edward Norris, a columnist, learns of their plight and arranges for them to appear that night in a night-club owned by Maxie Rosenbloom. But the youngsters, having overeaten on "hot dogs," are unable to complete their act. Rosenbloom orders them out, but the employees of the club, feeling sympathetic towards the young couple, promise to help them put on their act once again. On the following night, while the employees and Norris trick Rosenbloom into leaving the club for the evening, Vivian teaches Leon Belasco, the chef, her recipe for "soupy hash," a Missouri dish. Just as Vivian and Billy prepare to do their act, Rosenbloom returns unexpectedly. The employees lock him in the ice-box to give the youngsters an opportunity to do their routine. Meanwhile a wealthy food manufacturer, visiting the night-club, becomes enthused over the "soupy hash." It all ends with the young couple scoring a huge success with their act, and with their concluding a deal with the food tycoon to manufacture the "soupy hash," with the factory in their home town.

Henry Blankfort and Dick Irving Hyland wrote the screen play, Frank Gross produced it, and Eddie Cline directed it. The cast includes Minna Gombell, Andrew Tombes, Clem Bevans and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

**"Nevada" with Bob Mitchum, Ann Jeffreys
and Nancy Gates**
(RKO, no release date set; time, 62 min.)

A slightly better than average program Western melodrama. Although the story is not different from the usual type of Western story, it should please those who enjoy this type of entertainment, for it has exciting horse riding, a few good fist fights, and some comedy. There is some suspense throughout because of the danger to the hero in bucking up against the villains. The plot developments are obvious, but the action fans may overlook that fact since the story moves at a pretty good pace:—

After winning \$7,000 from a crooked gambler, Bob Mitchum, an adventurous cowboy, and his two pals, Guinn Williams and Richard Martin, find themselves pursued by the gambler's henchmen. The three men separate and agree to meet in Gold Hill, a gold-mining town. Meanwhile in Gold Hill, Craig Reynolds, a respected citizen, learns that huge deposits of blue clay, thought by the miners to be worthless, were rich in silver. He keeps this discovery to himself, planning to buy the miners' claims at low prices. Learning that Larry Wheat, a miner, planned to have the clay assayed, Reynolds and his henchman, Harry Woods, kill Wheat from ambush. Mitchum, on his way to town, discovers the body just as a sheriff's posse arrives. Since the \$7,000 in his pocket was precisely the amount the dead man was known to have been carrying, Mitchum is accused of murder and robbery. Reynolds and Powell stir up the miners to lynch Mitchum, but Williams and Martin arrive in time to rescue their pal through a clever ruse. Mitchum clears himself of the murder charge by decoying the crooked gambler

to Gold Hill and compelling him to state that he had lost the \$7,000 to him in a gambling game. Determined to track down the killer, Mitchum tries to force a confession from Powell. Reynolds, fearing that his henchman may talk, kills Powell and publicly lays the blame on Mitchum. Meanwhile Mitchum learns that the blue clay was rich in silver, and that Reynolds had tricked Nancy Gates, the murdered man's daughter, into selling her property to him. Learning that Reynolds was on his way to Carson City to legalize the claim, Mitchum pursues and captures him after a gun battle. Reynolds is held for the murder, and Mitchum and Nancy plan a new future together.

Norman Houston wrote the screen play based on the Zane Grey novel, Herman Schlom produced it, and Edward Killy directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Hollywood Canteen" with an all-star cast
(Warner Bros., December 30; time, 124 min.)

Good popular type entertainment, somewhat similar to "Stage Door Canteen." Blending comedy, music, and romance, it depicts Hollywood's generosity in providing recreation for the thousands of servicemen who pass through the Los Angeles area. The star-studded cast, which includes most of the Warner Brothers stars, as well as stars from other major and independent studios, assures the picture's box-office success. Many of the outstanding personalities appear very briefly, speaking just a few lines, while others are given more of an opportunity to display their particular talents, but all have been presented in a skillful manner, keeping one's interest alive throughout the proceedings. Those doing specialties include Eddie Cantor and Nora Martin in a singing duet; Jack Benny matching his talent as a violinist against the talent of Joseph Szigeti, famed violin virtuoso; Jane Wyman and Jack Carson in a song and dance routine; Roy Rogers, his horse, Trigger, and the Sons of the Pioneers in a Western song routine; Dennis Morgan and Joe E. Brown singing "You Can Always Tell a Yank," a stirring tune; Joan McCracken in a sensational comedy ballet dance; the Andrews Sisters singing a number of "swinging" tunes; Kitty Carlisle singing a ballad; Rosario and Rosita in a gypsy dance; and the Golden Gate Quartet singing a number of songs. A few of these specialty numbers are outstanding, while the others are highly entertaining. Jimmy Dorsey and his Band and Carmen Cavallaro and his Rhumba Orchestra furnish the music.

Winding its way through the different specialties is a human, appealing story concerning a young soldier (Robert Hutton) and his buddy (Dane Clark) who, after being wounded in the South Pacific, find themselves in Hollywood on a short leave. Visiting the Hollywood Canteen, Hutton hopes to meet Joan Leslie, his favorite actress. John Garfield and Bette Davis, learning of Hutton's desire, arrange for him to meet Joan. On one of his nightly visits to the Canteen, Hutton finds himself hailed as the millionth guest and, as a prize, he is given an expensive hotel suite, the use of a shiny limousine, and his choice of an actress for a week-end date. Of course, he selects Joan. The rest of the story is devoted to their falling in love and, towards the finish, a slight misunderstanding leads Hutton to believe that his romance with Joan was just a publicity stunt. As he prepares to leave Hollywood, however, Joan sees him off at the train and convinces him that her love was genuine.

Joan Leslie and Hutton make a very appealing romantic couple, while Dane Clark is exceptionally good as his buddy; his misadventures at the Canteen with the different stars provoke considerable laughter.

Delmar Daves wrote the screen play and directed it. Alex Gottlieb produced it. The cast includes Julie Bishop, Joan Crawford, Helmut Dantine, Faye Emerson, Victor Francen, Mary Gordon, Sydney Greenstreet, Alan Hale, Paul Henreid, Peter Lorre, Ida Lupino, Irene Manning, Eleanor Parker, Joyce Reynolds, John Ridgely, S. Z. Sakall, Zachary Scott, Alexis Smith, Barbara Stanwyck, Donald Woods and many others.

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A Smashing Victory

The United States Supreme Court's decision last Monday, which upheld the Department of Justice in its anti-trust suit against the Crescent Amusement Company and its affiliates, is a major victory for the Government and a great step forward in the independent exhibitors' fight against the monopolistic practices that have plagued them these many years.

In an editorial discussing the possible effects of the Government's appeal to the Supreme Court in this case, HARRISON'S REPORTS, in its July 24, 1943 issue, concluded that "... although there is the possibility that the ... appeal may have no effect on the industry whatever, there is a greater possibility that the Crescent Case may wind up with limitless implications as to the future conduct of business within the industry." And that is exactly what has happened, for the decision handed down by the Supreme Court is so far-reaching that its rulings will strengthen immeasurably the Government's position in other pending anti-trust suits, and will serve to curb considerably the widespread elimination of independent competition by the larger theatre circuits, both affiliated and unaffiliated.

The Crescent case has been in litigation so long that many of you may have forgotten its details. A short recapitulation of the facts should, therefore, prove helpful.

The Government filed its suit against Crescent and its affiliated companies in 1938, charging them with restraint of trade and conspiracy to violate the anti-trust laws. The eight major producer-distributors were named co-defendants but when the case came to trial, the five companies that had signed the Consent Decree were dismissed and, later on, the Court found that the charges against Columbia and Universal had not been sustained. United Artists, however, was found to have violated the anti-trust laws by combining with some of the defendants to eliminate independent theatre competition in two small situations.

The case was tried by Judge Elmer D. Davies, of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, who in a final decree handed down in May, 1943, found the defendants guilty of building up a monopoly in the theatre business, and enjoined and restrained them from continuing in combination with each other for the purpose of maintaining their monopoly; declared invalid the existing film franchises entered into between the defendants and the distributors (except for their theatres in Nashville); ordered the divestment of interlocking ownership among the defendants; and prohibited the coercion of independent exhibitors into either selling their theatres or abandoning whatever plans they had to compete with the defendants.

Despite its victory in the District Court, however, the Government felt that Judge Davies' decree failed to incorporate an effective restriction upon the defendants' right to acquire additional theatres, and was, therefore, inadequate to secure the continued existence of independent competition as contemplated by the Sherman Act. Accordingly, the Government, in July 1943, filed an appeal in the U. S. Supreme Court asking that the decree be remanded for a correction, which would enjoin and restrain the defendants from acquiring any additional theatres, outside of Nash-

ville, unless they first proved to the Court that such acquisitions would not unreasonably restrain competition. The Government contended that, unless the Court's approval were obtained prior to the acquisitions, the defendants could continue to eliminate theatres in competitive situations, and though the Government might subsequently prove that the acquisitions were in restraint of trade, it would be impossible, as a practical matter, to restore the competitive situations to their original status.

Shortly after the Government filed its appeal, Crescent filed a cross-appeal seeking to overthrow the decree in its entirety, on the grounds that there was no evidence to support the District Court's findings, and that the provision for divestment of stock interests would be tantamount to confiscation under the current tax laws.

Briefly, the Supreme Court ruled as follows:

Not only did it uphold the District Court's decree in its entirety, but it also expanded the decree by ruling that it should be revised "so as to prohibit future acquisitions of a financial interest in additional theatres outside of Nashville except after an affirmative showing that such acquisitions will not unreasonably restrain competition." It upheld the invalidation of existing franchises; the provisions against use of buying power in non-competitive situations as a means of compelling the distributors to grant monopoly rights in competitive situations; and the provision requiring each of the defendants to divest itself of financial interest in the others.

Lack of space prevents HARRISON'S REPORTS from presenting in this issue either a comprehensive review of the Supreme Court's decision, or a full discussion of the possible effects its rulings will have in alleviating some of the hardships suffered by the independent exhibitors. But it will refer to this decision again in subsequent issues. Meanwhile, it should like to reproduce this part of the Supreme Court's opinion:

"The crux of the Government's case was the use of the buying power of the combination for the purpose of eliminating competition with the exhibitors and acquiring a monopoly in the areas in question. There was ample evidence that the combination used its buying power for the purpose either of restricting the ability of its competitors to license films or of eliminating competition with the exhibitors in acquiring a monopoly in the areas in question. There was ample evidence that the combination used its buying power for the purpose either of restricting the ability of its competitors to license film or of eliminating competition by acquiring the competitor's property or otherwise. For example, the defendants would insist that a distributor give them monopoly rights in towns where they had competition or else defendants would not give the distributor any business in the closed towns where they had no competition. The competitor not being able to renew his contract for films would frequently go out of business or come to terms and sell out to the combination with an agreement not to compete for a term of years. The mere threat would at times be sufficient and cause the competitor to fall out to the combination 'because his mule scared.'

(Continued on last page)

**"Crazy Knights" with Billy Gilbert,
Shemp Howard and Maxie Rosenbloom**
(Monogram, Dec. 8; time, 62 min.)

Poor program entertainment. It is a rowdyish murder mystery with comedy, much of it slapstick, which may prove amusing to children. Most adults, however, will probably find it extremely tiresome. Not only is the story insipid, but also the acting is bad. The whole thing could have been put into two reels with room to spare. This is the second comedy in which Billy Gilbert, Shemp Howard, and Maxie Rosenbloom have been featured together, their first being "Three of a Kind," which, too, was a mediocre picture. All three comedians have the ability to provoke laughs, but the material given them thus far has been too much of a handicap:—

Gilbert and Howard, performers in a trained gorilla act, and Bernie Snell, their manager, stop their car to aid John Hamilton, his niece, Jane Hazard, and his secretary, Tay Dunn, who were stranded on the road with auto trouble. They drive them and their chauffeur (Maxie Rosenbloom) to Hamilton's country estate, and accept an invitation to remain overnight. From Hamilton's conversation and from some queer happenings in the house, the boys gather that he feared for his life. During the night, no one is able to sleep; Hamilton is knocked unconscious by a mysterious person; strange voices cry out in the night; ghosts skip around on the front lawn adjoining the family cemetery; and Dunn is found murdered. Tim Ryan, a private detective engaged by Minerva Urecal, the housekeeper, arrives on the scene to investigate and, to add to the confusion, the act's gorilla escapes from its cage. Eventually, Howard and Gilbert discover an underground cave entrance to the house, with secret passages that led to Hamilton's room. There, the boys trap Hamilton and prove that he intended to murder his niece to gain control of her money, and that he had murdered Dunn because he had discovered his plans.

Tim Ryan wrote the screen play, Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz produced it, and William Beaudine directed it. Barney Sarecky was associate producer. Unobjectionable morally.

"The Three Caballeros"

(RKO, no release date set; time, 72 min.)

Very good and very unique! It is a gay, colorful blend of music, comedy, animation and live action, the sort that should delight every type of audience. The picture is a revolutionary departure in screen entertainment in that it combines real life personalities with animated figures, both appearing in the same scenes against backgrounds that are real and animated. One cannot help but marvel at Disney's perfection of this new technique, which, for example, permits his animated characters to dance with the live characters, and even to cavort on a real sandy beach, playfully chasing real life bathing beauties. The array of brilliant colors and the magnificence of the Technicolor photography hold the spectator fascinated.

The story begins on Donald Duck's birthday, and he is shown receiving a huge package from his friends in Latin America. Inside he finds a number of smaller packages, including a 16 mm. projector, screen, and film. After a series of hilarious gags, in which he finds himself rolled up in the screen, Donald succeeds in putting the projector into operation, and there unfolds on the screen a story about rare South American birds. Shown are the misadventures of a South Pole penguin, who sets out for a warm climate because he

could not keep his feet warm, and the story of a flying donkey, who, captured by a little boy-gaicho, is trained by him in secret to win a horse race at a fiesta. The picture finished, Donald opens another gift package and finds a book titled "Brazil," out of which pops Joe Carioca, the Brazilian parrot-about-town, his old friend, who takes him on a tour of Brazil by boarding a train pictured in the book. They go to colorful Bahia, where both participate in a gay fiesta in which Donald becomes enamoured of Aurora Miranda, a flirtatious singer and samba dancer. Donald and Joe return from their trip and both open up the last of Donald's packages, out of which jumps Panchito, a Mexican charro rooster, who was a gentleman cowboy from Mexico City. Embracing the two and giving them each a sombrero, Panchito takes them on a tour of Mexico. The three visit among other places the beach resort of Acapulca, Vera Cruz, and Mexico City. During their tour, the boys participate in native dances, learn about Mexican customs, become involved in a bullfight, and have many other adventures too numerous to mention, all hilariously funny.

The picture's sixteen tuneful Latin American songs, and the fascinating samba and rumba dances, are a treat to the ear and the eye. Featured in the scenes combining live action and animation are Aurora Miranda, of Brazil, and Dora Luz and Carmen Molina of Mexico.

"Dancing in Manhattan"
with Fred Brady and Jeff Donnell
(Columbia, Dec. 14; time, 61 min.)

Just one of those minor program comedy-melodramas, in which there is little human interest, and no sympathy is felt for the characters. The story is thin and artificial, and it contains no new angles. Here and there it has an amusing bit of comedy, but there is not enough of it to put the picture over. Most of the action is slow-moving, because of the excessive talk and, since the outcome is obvious, there is little to hold one's interest. Another drawback is the fact that none of the players means anything at the box-office:—

Blackmailed by William Wright and his wife, Ann Savage, Howard Freeman arranges with police inspector Cy Kendall to pay the blackmailing couple \$5,000 in marked money. When Kendall approaches the pair in the Crystal Room, a fashionable night-club, to arrest them, Ann drops the money in a bowl of salad, which eventually finds its way into a garbage can. On the following morning, the money is found by Fred Brady, a garbage collector, who resigns from his job, buys his girl (Jeff Donnell) a new dress, and takes her to the Crystal Room for an evening of fun. Meanwhile Wright and Ann trace the money to Brady and learn that he had gone to the night-club. They follow him there, unaware that they were being trailed by Kendall. At the Crystal Room, the blackmailers strike up an acquaintance with Brady and Jeff. Wright, to get back the money, tries to induce Brady to invest in a fake oil stock. Meanwhile Ann learns from a cigarette girl that Brady had tipped her and other employees with marked bills. Informed by Ann of this development, Wright decides to move quickly; he induces Brady to accompany him to his office immediately to close the stock transaction. At the office, Wright viciously demands the money from Brady, starting a fight. Kendall and the police arrive in time to stop the fight and to arrest Wright. Kendall takes Brady back to Jeff at the night-club, where Freeman

gives the young man a \$5,000 reward for helping to trap the blackmailers.

Erna Lazarus wrote the screen play, Wallace MacDonald produced it, and Henry Levin directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Keys of the Kingdom" with Gregory Peck

(20th Century-Fox, January; time, 137 min.)

Based on A. J. Cronin's best-selling novel of the same title, this is a distinguished, heart-warming drama about a kindly Scottish priest, who unselfishly devotes many years of his life to bring Christianity to the poor people of an inland Chinese city. It is a story of sacrifice, tolerance, and faith, told in a dignified, sympathetic, and impressive way. The picture's pace is too slow in spots, and the elimination of some of the footage would benefit it, nevertheless, it holds one's attention all the way through. Gregory Peck, as the priest, gives a flawless and sensitive performance. He is shown as a kindly soul, trying to live up to the precepts of his religion, yet being liberal in his views and tolerant of the beliefs of others. As a matter of fact, his closest friend is shown as a confirmed atheist. Many of the situations are deeply moving, particularly the one towards the end, where the priest, after more than a half century of unswerving devotion to his work, in which he succeeds in establishing his mission despite many hardships, is bid farewell by his Chinese converts and by his many other friends as he leaves to assume charge of a parish in his native Scotland.

The story, told in flashback, begins with the visit of Monsignor Sir Cedric Hardwicke to the aged priest's Scotland parish, where he had come to investigate the parish's poorly managed affairs. Determined to recommend Peck's retirement, Hardwicke comes upon the old priest's diary and learns that, as a child, he had been orphaned by the untimely death of his parents, and that he had been befriended by an aunt, who had raised him and had paid for his education. When the girl he loved had proved unfaithful to him, Peck turned to an ecclesiastical career for solace. He had failed miserably in his first two curacies, and had been induced by Bishop Edmund Gwenn, his friend and advisor, to accept a missionary post in China. In China, Peck had found the mission house in ruins, and he had learned that his predecessor had kept the former congregation together by payments of rice. He had refused to obtain converts by subsidizing them and, as a result, his progression with a new mission had been slow. Aided by Benson Song, a sincere Chinese convert, and by a wealthy mandarin whose son he had saved from death, Peck had slowly built his new mission. His church had been destroyed during a civil war, and he had found it necessary to personally help the Government troops destroy the Chinese bandits in order to save the remainder of his mission. After many difficult years, he had succeeded in rebuilding and expanding the mission, before being returned to the Scotland parish. Hardwicke, impressed by the hardships and disappointments Peck had endured, humbly discards his recommendation for retirement and assures the old priest that his position in the parish will not be altered.

The performances of the supporting cast are outstanding. They include, among others, Thomas Mitchell, as the priest's atheist friend, who loses his life defending the mission against the bandits; Leonard Strong, as the Mandarin; Vincent Price, as a pompous

Bishop; Roddy McDowall, as the priest as a child; James Gleason and Anne Revere, as friendly missionaries of another faith; Rosa Stradner, as the haughty mother superior who is slow to recognize Peck's noble work; and Ruth Nelson and Dennis Hoey, as Peck's parents.

Nunnally Johnson and Joseph L. Mankiewicz wrote the screen play. Mr. Mankiewicz produced it, and John M. Stahl directed it. Other members in the cast include Peggy Ann Garner, Jane Ball, Philip Ahn, Edith Barrett, Sara Allgood, Richard Loo, Ruth Ford and Abner Biberman.

"Music for Millions" with June Allyson, Margaret O'Brien and Jimmy Durante

(MGM, no release date set; time, 118 min.)

This is a fairly good mass entertainment, effectively blending classical music, comedy, and an appealing story. Its two hours' running time, however, is much too long for what the picture has to offer, and some judicious cutting would not hurt it. Musically, the picture offers the compositions of Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, Herbert, Grieg, Debussy, Chopin and others, played by a symphony orchestra led by Jose Iturbi, who displays also his talents as a pianist; a huge mixed choir singing the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah"; Larry Adler, famed harmonica player, in a rendition of "Clare de Lune"; and Jimmy Durante singing two comical ditties in his well known bombastic style. Dramatically, it offers a heart-warming story revolving around a group of girls playing in the orchestra, who try to prevent one of their number, an expectant mother, from cracking under the strain of not having heard from her soldier-husband overseas. June Allyson, as the anguished girl, shines as a dramatic actress; she makes one feel keenly her joy and her sorrow. And Margaret O'Brien, as June's little sister, who urges her to have faith in prayer, is as appealing as ever. The situation in which Margaret explains to Durante that angels, not storks, deliver babies, is a memorable highlight. Durante, as the orchestra's general handyman, provides most of the comedy, while Hugh Herbert has an amusing bit as a forger.

In the development of the story, Margaret arrives in New York to stay with June, who lived together with a group of girls, her co-players in the symphony orchestra. On the day the orchestra prepares to go on a tour of army camps, a telegram arrives announcing the death of June's husband in action. Lest the news affect June's health, the girls decide to keep it from her until after her baby is born. June's failure to hear from her husband causes her to worry, and she soon becomes convinced that he had died. Margaret, a firm believer in prayer, urges June to pray for his safety. To ease June's mind, the girls arrange with Hugh Herbert, a forger, to send her a letter in her husband's handwriting. A few days later, when a letter arrives from her husband explaining that he had been lost in the jungle, June becomes her normal self. On the night June is taken to the hospital, the girls meet Herbert, who, intoxicated, apologizes for failing to write the letter. The girls joyously realize that June's husband was really alive, and their happiness is complete when June bears a son. Margaret beams with pride, satisfied that her prayers had been answered.

Myles Connolly wrote the screen play, Joe Pasternak produced it, and Henry Koster directed it. The cast includes Marsha Hunt, Marie Wilson, Harry Davenport, Helen Gilbert and others.

"In that way, some of the affiliates were born. In summarizing various deals of this character the district court said, each of these agreements not to compete with Crescent or its affiliates in other towns extended far beyond the protection of the business being sold, and demonstrated a clear intention to monopolize theatre operation wherever they or their affiliates secured a foothold.

"The same type of warfare was waged with franchise contracts with certain major distributors covering a term of years. These gave the defendants important exclusive film licensing agreements. Their details varies, but generally they gave the defendant exhibitors the right to first-run exhibit of all feature pictures which they chose to select in their designated towns. Clearances over the same or nearby towns were provided, i.e., a time lag was established between the showing by the defendant exhibitors and a subsequent showing by others. The opportunity of competitors to obtain feature pictures for subsequent-runs was further curtailed by repeat provisions which gave the defendant exhibitors the option of showing the pictures in their theatres a second time. In reviewing one of these franchise agreements the district court concluded, the repeat-run clause in the franchise was completely effective in preventing the sale of a second-run of any Paramount features to any opposition theatre.

"We are now told, however, that the independents were eliminated by the normal processes of competition; that their theatres were less attractive; that their service was inferior; that they were not as efficient business men as the defendants. We may assume that if a single exhibitor launched such a plan of economic warfare he would not run afoul of the Sherman Act. But the vice of this undertaking was the combination of several exhibitors in a plan of concerted action. They had unity of purpose and unity of action. They pooled their buying power for a common end. It will not do to analogize this to a case where purchasing power is pooled so that the buyers may obtain more favorable terms. The plan here was to crush competition and to build a circuit for the exhibitors. The district court found that some of the distributors were co-conspirators on certain phases of the program. But we can put that circumstance to one side and not stop to inquire whether the findings are adequate on that phase of the case. For it is immaterial whether the distributors technically were or were not members of the conspiracy. The showing of motion pictures is of course a local affair. But action by a combination of exhibitors to obtain an agreement with a distributor whereby commerce with a competing exhibitor is suppressed or restrained is a conspiracy in restraint of trade and a conspiracy to monopolize a part of the trade or commerce among the states, each of which is prohibited by the Sherman Act.

"The exhibitors, however, claim that the findings against them on the facts must fall because of improper evidence. The evidence to which this objection is directed consists of letters or reports written by employees of certain of the major distributors to other employees or officers in the same company stating reasons why the distributor was discriminating against independents in favor of defendants. The United States asserts that these letters or reports were declarations of one conspirator in furtherance of the common objective and therefore admissible as evidence against all. And it is argued that it makes no difference that these distributors were dismissed out of the case since they were charged with being co-conspirators and since the findings are with certain exceptions adequate to support the charge. We do not come to that question. The other evidence established the position of the distributors in their relations to the theatres involved, what the distributors in fact did, the combination of the defendants, the character and extent of their buying power, and how it was in fact used. This other evidence was sufficient to establish the restraints of trade and monopolistic practices; the purpose, character, and the extent of the combination are inferable from it alone. Thus even if error be assumed in the introduction of the letters and reports the burden of showing prejudice has not been sustained."

Being the first industry case to reach the Supreme Court in which divestiture of theatre holdings was a main issue, the

independent exhibitors may well rejoice in the knowledge that the highest court in the land looks favorably upon theatre divorcement as a remedy when the facts justify such action. There can be no doubt that the decision will have an important bearing, not only on the pending anti-trust cases, but also on the future dealings between the distributors and the larger circuits in that they will have to curtail and even cease their predatory practices aimed at squeezing out the independent exhibitor.

THE PRODUCERS SHOULD HAVE REGARD FOR THE PUBLIC'S SENTIMENTS

Mr. Harold Heffernan, Hollywood correspondent of the *Detroit News* and of the North American Newspaper Alliance, wrote the following in his November 27 column:

"Behind the movie headlines: When Joel McCrea rebelled at killing off his best friend in a piece of movie fiction at Paramount a couple of weeks ago, neither he nor the studio looked for such substantial support of his stand by fans throughout the country. Letters have been pouring in assuring McCrea that he is on the right track. And now Joel is more determined than ever that a revise writing job must be done on 'The Virginian,' so that his cattle-rustling pal—his name was Steve in Owen Wister's novel—will be treated to some other form of justice rather than hanging from a tree.

"The McCrea protest was extremely interesting in view of overnight type reversals on the part of many Hollywood heroes noted for their fine, brave, kindly deeds and nothing else. Charles Boyer is known to be slightly aghast at the tone of the letters he's received since his 82-minute persecution of Ingrid Bergman in 'Gaslight.' Fred MacMurray is being soundly spanked in his mail these days for entering into a murderous plot with Barbara Stanwyck via the popular 'Double Indemnity.' Fred says he will think long and hard before doing any more celluloid dirt.

"In view of these kickbacks, Ray Milland is now apprehensive about the reception he'll receive in 'The Lost Weekend.' In that one Ray plays a psychopathic drunk and is anything but a sympathetic character. . . ."

This is not the first time that the public has expressed its disapproval of villainous parts taken by its screen idols. The late Tom Mix, in all the pictures that he made, had never been seen to take a drink at a bar or anywhere else. Whenever he entered a saloon, he would order a glass of milk. He knew the effect, not only upon his popularity, but also upon the minds of the young, who were his chief supporters. Harry Carey was induced by the late Irving Thalberg to play the villain in "The Trail of '98." That part broke the hearts of Carey's young followers, as they expressed themselves in letters to him. It took him years to live down that part and today Harry Carey will not take a villainous part if he were offered a truckful of gold. The popularity of George Bancroft was killed by two pictures in which he played villainous parts. George Raft refused to take the chief character's part in "Temple Drake" (William Faulkner's "Sanctuary") and was suspended by Paramount, until HARRISON'S REPORTS took up his case and he was reinstated. Jack LaRue took that part and, as a result, the popularity he had gained as the priest in "Farewell to Arms" was destroyed.

Mr. Heffernan mentions that Ray Milland is worrying about the reception that the public will give him as the psychopathic drunk in "The Lost Weekend." Milland has cause to worry, for excessive drinking has been looked upon by the public with disfavor.

The producers should give a little more thought to the sentiments of the picture-goers; they enjoy the heroic illusions built up by their screen idols, and many of them become keenly disappointed when these illusions are destroyed by unsympathetic parts. When a producer receives one hundred letters from fans expressing their disapproval of either excessive drinking, or some other objectionable performance, he should not assume that there are no more than one hundred indignant patrons; such a number is infinitesimal as compared with the number of those who object but who do not make their objections heard.

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A LOST OPPORTUNITY

On November 18, the motion picture industry gave in Hollywood, on the occasion of the opening of the Sixth War Loan Drive, one of the greatest pageants that have ever been held in the United States for any purpose. More than five thousands horses, approximately five hundred vehicles, and thousands of picture people, including almost twenty top screen stars, took part in this affair, named the "Cavalcade of the West." It was so huge that it took more than three hours for the parade to pass by any one point, and so impressive that the officials who represented the Treasury Department did not hesitate to express their amazement. They told Messrs. Eugene Strong and Dick Dixon, two veteran motion picture men who managed the affair, that they had no conception that it was to be so great a pageant, and offered to them their congratulations and the thanks of the Government, not only orally but also by personal letters.

Because of the shortage of newsprint the affair did not get in the newspapers of the nation the space that it would have been given if times had been normal. Even the Los Angeles papers, to whom this affair was a local pride, were compelled to give it limited space.

The motion picture producing companies had an opportunity to play this pageant up in the nation's papers and national magazines through institutional advertising, and thus gain the good will of the American public,—a good will that may, when times become normal, prove invaluable to the industry. Through such advertisements, they could have told the public what the industry has done and still is doing, not only for the war loan drives, in which it has always played a leading role, but also for G.I. Joe—taking picture entertainment to him, no matter how inaccessible may be the place where he is stationed, and no matter how difficult the conditions under which the pictures are shown. They could, for example, tell the American people of instances in the Pacific where pictures have been shown to the servicemen in the rain—they did not mind the rain provided they could see the full picture.

There are a thousand and one other such instances where the producers could tell the American people what the industry is doing to uphold the morale of the nation's armed forces, not only by either making them laugh or by moving them, but also by taking to them a bit of home. But they have done very little to enlighten the American people as to the very significant part the industry is playing in this war.

When a Government extols an industry by striking a postage stamp in its honor, that industry's leaders should certainly avail themselves of the opportunity of bringing that honor forcibly before the public.

Other industries are spending millions of dollars (most of which is deductible from income for tax purposes) to acquaint the public with the part they are playing in helping the nation win the war. The motion picture industry is the only one that has done nothing of the kind; it merely lets the work itself impress the public. But this is not the most effective way when one bears in mind the number of "vultures" who have always been ready to spring upon the industry to tear it apart.

Need we remind the readers of this publication of the Washington hearings, held for the purpose of hamstringing the industry, which hearings were interrupted only because of the war?

The motion picture industry may never again find an opportunity to gain the good will of the public to the same extent that it is finding it now, but nothing is being done about it.

What is the matter with the industry leaders? Are they so selfish as to be willing to lose such an opportunity just because, in publicizing the industry's contribution towards the war, they do not publicize their own individual companies?

HARRISON'S REPORTS calls upon Spyros Skouras to take the lead in inducing the other companies to undertake at once institutional advertising. Mr. Skouras, though a veteran in the picture business, is still young and not bound by prejudices. He can get them together if he wants to.

HARRISON'S REPORTS offers to its subscribers and readers The Greetings of the Season

"Practically Yours" with Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 90 min.)

Good entertainment for the masses. It starts off in highly dramatic fashion and, by a clever twist, turns into a breezy romantic comedy-farce, deftly combining amusing situations with several dramatic moments. The story is thin but unique, and the romantic complications are so amusing that audiences will chuckle with delight at some of the situations. Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray give engaging performances, both winning the spectator's sympathy. Considering their popularity, the picture should prove to be a strong box-office attraction:—

Disappearing in a burst of smoke as he dives his plane into a Jap carrier, Lieutenant Fred MacMurray's last words are about his love for "Peggy." His remarks, recorded by naval monitor, are broadcast to the station during memorial services honoring him as a hero. "Peggy" (Claudette Colbert), a girl with whom MacMurray formerly worked in the same office, is stunned to learn that he died with her name on his lips. The nation's sympathy goes out to her, and she is besieged by requests to appear at war bond rallies. When word suddenly comes that MacMurray had been found alive, and that he was returning home on furlough, Claudette rushes to greet him. MacMurray, whose last words had been in reference to his dog, "Piggy," is ill at ease, but wishing to spare Claudette's feelings, he does not reveal the truth. Both are invited to be the house guests of Cecil Kellaway, their wealthy employer, who makes elaborate plans for their marriage before the end of MacMurray's furlough. Alone with Claudette, MacMurray tells her the truth, but both agree to pretend that they were in love so as not to disillusion their many well-meaning friends. Claudette, to salve her hurt pride, informs MacMurray that she was in love with Gil Lamb, a pompous fellow worker. For most of MacMurray's furlough, the young couple find themselves projected into many difficulties as they try to keep up appearances and to delay Kellaway's plans for their marriage. Meanwhile MacMurray really falls in love with Claudette and asks her to marry him—after the war. Claudette, determined not to wait, announces their wedding plans over the radio during the launching of a ship named after MacMurray, and she asks Robert Bentley, a Supreme Court judge, to marry them on the spot. MacMurray, finding no way out, goes through with the ceremony.

Norman Krasna wrote the screen play, and Mitchell Leisen produced and directed it. The cast includes Tom Powers, Jane Frazee, Rosemary De Camp, Isabel Randolph, Mikhail Rasumny and others. Unobjectionable morally.

"Can't Help Singing" with Deanna Durbin and Robert Paige

(Universal, Dec. 29; time, 89 min.)

A good entertainment, produced lavishly; its gay quality should put it over with all types of audiences. Musically, it is fine; Deanna Durbin, in better voice than ever before, handles the singing expertly, doing justice to the excellent musical score composed by Jerome Kern. A few of the songs are already fast becoming national favorites. The story, a typical musical comedy plot, is featherweight, but it is pleasant and has romantic appeal. The comedy is not of the boisterous sort, but it keeps one chuckling throughout. Akim Tamiroff and Leonid Kinskey, as two fake Russian noblemen, are fairly amusing. Deanna Durbin is as charming as ever as the headstrong daughter of a Senator, and she appears to better advantage here than she has appeared for some time. The action takes place during the California gold rush days, and the settings, costumes, and Technicolor photography are a creditable part of the production:—

To keep his daughter (Deanna) from seeing Lieutenant David Bruce, Senator Ray Collins uses his influence to have him transferred to California. Deanna, without informing her father, sets out from Washington to follow Bruce. At Independence, Mo., Deanna, failing to obtain accommodations on a wagon train, buys a horse and wagon from Andrew Tombes, a swindler, only to learn that it was not his to sell. She locates Tombes in a gambling hall just as he loses the money to Robert Paige in a poker game. When Deanna insists that he return the money to her, Paige recognizes her as the missing daughter of Senator Collins, for whom a \$5,000 reward had been offered. Lest Paige report her, Deanna offers him \$10,000 if he will take her to California, promising him that the money will be paid to him by Thomas Gomez, a wealthy miner, whom she misrepresents as her fiancé. Paige, believing her false story, agrees. En route, both become attracted to each other despite their outward an-

tagonism and, by the time they reach California, each promises never to leave the other. Complications arise, however, when Gomez arrives in town and Paige insists that Deanna tell him of her new love. Before Deanna can explain the hoax, Bruce dashes up and embraces her and, in the midst of this confusion, her father arrives, leading Paige to believe that he was a third suitor. Deanna finally explains matters to Paige's satisfaction, and both receive the blessing of her father, who was delighted at her rejection of Bruce.

Lewis R. Foster and Frank Ryan wrote the screen play, Felix Jackson produced it, and Mr. Ryan directed it.

"Here Come the Waves" with Bing Crosby, Betty Hutton and Sonny Tufts

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 99 min.)

With Bing Crosby and Betty Hutton heading the cast, this romantic comedy with music should have no trouble attracting customers, but they will find it no more than just fair entertainment. The story, though timely, is thin, and it unfolds in a manner one expects. The musical part of the picture, which consists of a few production numbers and some songs sung by Crosby and Miss Hutton, is fairly good. As a matter of fact, a little more music and a little less story would have helped matters considerably. Betty Hutton does good work in her dual role of twin sisters, each of different temperaments, and Bing Crosby is his usual pleasing self, but both are handicapped by the inadequate script:—

Visiting a night-club with Sonny Tufts, his sailor-pal, Crosby, a famous crooner, meets the Adams twins, red-headed Rosemary (Betty Hutton), a quiet girl, and Susie (also Miss Hutton), a boisterous sort. Both were WAVES. Susie, an inveterate admirer of Crosby's, is thrilled, but Rosemary remains aloof, arousing Crosby's interest. Tufts, too, had eyes for Rosemary. When Crosby joins the Navy and is shipped to San Diego together with Tufts, Susie requests and is granted a transfer to the same city. Rosemary goes along under the same orders. The girls meet up again with Crosby and Tufts, who continuously doublecross each other as they vie for Rosemary's attentions. Susie, however, is too madly in love with Crosby to notice his affection for her sister. Worried lest Crosby be assigned to combat duty, Susie signs her name to a letter suggesting that he put on a big show to recruit WAVES. Crosby, chagrined, accepts the assignment but blames Tufts for writing the letter. Rosemary, not in on the plot, believes Crosby had deliberately tried to avoid combat duty. The night before the opening of the show, Crosby tries to propose to Rosemary. Tufts, desperate, attempts to prevent the proposal; he induces Susie to don a red wig and to impersonate Rosemary, and then makes love to her to disillusion Crosby. A comedy of errors results when Rosemary arrives on the scene and, after a series of misunderstandings, Susie and Tufts confess the hoax. It all ends with the show a huge success, Rosemary in Crosby's arms, and Susie and Tufts in love.

Allan Scott, Ken Englund, and Zion Myers wrote the screen play, and Mark Sandrich produced and directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Double Exposure" with Chester Morris

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 64 min.)

An entertaining program murder-mystery melodrama with amusing comedy situations. Because the comedy is stressed, it is difficult for the spectator to take the melodramatic angle seriously, nevertheless, the story offers several new twists and, since the mystery is not solved until the end, it holds one's attention well. Nancy Kelly, as the small-town, quick-witted photographer, is particularly good. As a matter of fact, the direction and the performances are superior to the story values:—

Impressed with a photo in a small-town newspaper, Chester Morris, editor of a national picture magazine, wires an offer of a job to the paper's photographer. He is delightfully surprised when the photographer turns out to be an attractive girl (Nancy Kelly), and he loses no time promoting a romance with her. When Philip Terry, Nancy's fiancé, arrives in town, Nancy, to protect her job, leads Morris to believe that Terry was her brother. Terry, though jealous, agrees to the hoax. One evening at a night club, Charles Arnt, a drunken playboy, tells Nancy that he and his sixth wife (Jane Farrar) had separated, and he asks her to marry him. He gives Nancy the key to his apartment, telling her to use it during his stay in Reno. The incident provokes Jane, who quarrels publicly with Nancy. Shortly after, Morris gives Terry a job on the magazine and assigns him with Nancy to make "Photomystery of the Week," a weekly feature. Nancy goes to Arnt's vacant apartment, where she poses in one of Jane's negligees for a series of murder pic-

tures taken by Terry. Morris eventually learns that Terry was not Nancy's brother, and he tricks him into boarding a boat bound for Russia so that he could have a clear field with Nancy. Shortly after the "Photomystery" pictures are published, Arnt's wife is found murdered and, by a strange coincidence, one of Nancy's photos is an exact replica of the murder scene photographed by the police. The district attorney, believing Nancy's photo to be genuine, charges her with the murder, claiming that she killed Jane in an argument over Arnt. Realizing that he had to find the real murderer to save Nancy, Morris starts an investigation of his own and, through trick photography, succeeds in proving that Arnt was the murderer. It all ends with Nancy falling into Morris' arms just as Terry returns from Russia with a Slavic bride.

Winston Miller and Maxwell Sahne wrote the screen play, and William Berke directed it. It is a Pine-Thomas production. Unobjectionable morally.

"Gentle Annie" with Marjorie Main, James Craig and Donna Reed

(MGM, no release date set; time, 80 min.)

A moderately entertaining western-like program melodrama. The action, which takes place in the Oklahoma territory in 1900, is considerably exciting in spots, but the story is thin, implausible, and not very clear; the average audience may find it difficult to understand. The action revolves around a pioneer woman and her two sons, train-robbers, whose befriending of a U. S. Marshal posing as a hobo leads to their undoing. A by-plot concerning the sons' feud with the local sheriff serves only to confuse the main story line and to provide some gunplay. There is some romantic interest, but that, too, has no direct bearing on the plot. There is deep human interest in the sons' devotion to their mother, but one finds it difficult to sympathize with them because of their nefarious ways:—

James Craig, a U. S. Marshal dressed as a hobo, goes to the Oklahoma territory to investigate a train robbery. Through town gossip, he learns that Paul Langton and Henry Morgan, brothers, were suspected of the crime. He makes their acquaintance when he intervenes in a brawl between Langton and Sheriff Barton MacLane. After the fight, in which Craig saves Langton's life, the brothers take him to their ranch, where they lived with their mother, Marjorie Main. Befriended by the family, and impressed by the boys' devotion to their mother, Craig becomes so fond of the brothers that he does not believe them to be the train robbers he was hunting. The brothers, having accepted Craig as their friend, reveal that they had robbed the train and ask him to join them in another robbery. Compelled to reveal his identity, Craig informs the boys that he has no alternative but to arrest them. Meanwhile the sheriff, himself a thief, comes to the ranch in search of the stolen money and shoots the boys' mother. Before she dies, Miss Main tells Craig that MacLane had shot her. Promising the brothers a fair trial in Kansas City, Craig returns their guns and takes them into town. A gun battle ensues when the three encounter MacLane and his henchmen. The gang is wiped out, but Langton, too, loses his life. Craig puts the remaining brother on a train bound for Kansas City, placing him on his honor to report to a deputy Marshal.

Lawrence Hazard wrote the screen play, Robert Sisk produced it, and Andrew Marton directed it. The cast includes the late John Phillip and others. Adult entertainment.

"House of Frankenstein" with Boris Karloff and Lon Chaney

(Universal, no release date set; time, 70 min.)

The presence in one picture of such worthies as Frankenstein's Monster, Dracula, the Wolf Man, a murderous psychopathic hunchback, and the inevitable mad scientist, will undoubtedly gladden the hearts of the avid horror picture fans, and should be of considerable help to the exhibitor in selling the picture to them. Despite this array of horrific characters, however, "House of Frankenstein" is only a mild horror picture, more ludicrous than terrifying. The whole thing is a rehash of the fantastic doings of these characters in previous pictures and, since they do exactly what is expected of them, the spectator is neither shocked nor chilled. It should, nevertheless, get by as a supporting feature wherever this type of entertainment is acceptable:—

Boris Karloff, a scientist, imprisoned for his macabre experiments with Frankenstein, escapes from jail together with J. Carrol Naish, a deformed murderer. They meet George Zucco, owner of a traveling exhibit of horrors, among which was the skeleton of Dracula (John Carradine). Killing Zucco, both men travel with the exhibit to Riegelburg, where

Karloff planned to kill Sig Ruman, the man responsible for his imprisonment. There, Karloff brings Dracula to life and induces him to murder Ruman. Dracula, however, himself meets death when he attempts to kidnap Anne Gwynne, Ruman's granddaughter; trapped by the police, he turns into a skeleton at dawn. Meanwhile Karloff and Naish escape and head for the ruins of Frankenstein's castle. En route, they pick up Elena Verdugo, a gypsy dancer, with whom Naish falls in love. At the ruins, they find the frozen forms of both Frankenstein's Monster (Glenn Strange) and the Wolf Man (Lon Chaney). Karloff frees both creatures from the ice, and the Wolf Man turns into a human. Secretly planning to transplant Chaney's brain to the Monster's body, Karloff finds himself thwarted when Chaney, affected by a full moon, turns into a werewolf and attacks the gypsy girl, who kills him before dying herself. The hunchback, enraged by the girl's death, blames Karloff and attacks him just as the Monster is brought to life by the use of electronics. Killing the hunchback and rendering Karloff unconscious, the Monster, with the scientist under one arm, flees to a swamp, where both are engulfed by the quicksands.

Edward T. Lowe wrote the screen play, Paul Malvern produced it, and Earle C. Kenton directed it. The cast includes Peter Coe and others. Unpleasant for children.

"Tomorrow, the World" with Fredric March, Betty Field and Skippy Homeier

(United Artists, Dec. 29; time, 86 min.)

A powerful, intelligently produced drama, one that presents a timely problem—the reformation of millions of German children who have been indoctrinated with Nazi ideology. This drama does not furnish the answer, but it certainly calls attention to the problem in an objective and meaningful way. The action revolves around a diabolically cunning twelve-year-old German boy, who, given refuge in the home of his American uncle, deliberately brings confusion and grief to the family as he flouts the democratic way of life and tries to carry out the ideals of his Nazi training. Much of what transpires is somewhat overdrawn and exaggerated, but the direction and the acting are of such excellence that what is shown is at all times very effective. Skippy Homeier, as the despicable Nazi youngster, gives a remarkably fine performance; his portrayal is so perfect that one feels like cheering when his exasperated uncle almost strangles the life out of him. It is a grim entertainment, one which will appeal mostly to class audiences, but the fame of the stage play, from which the story has been adapted, and the word-of-mouth advertising that will surely be given Skippy's performance, should attract considerable attention from the rank and file:—

Arriving at the mid-western home of his uncle (Fredric March), a chemistry professor, Skippy is welcomed by Joan Carroll, March's motherless daughter; Agnes Moorehead, his spinster sister; and Betty Field, a Jewish school teacher, whom March planned to marry. Extremely stiff and formal in his actions, Skippy makes a disparaging remark when he discovers that Betty is Jewish, and marches off to change his clothes. Later, he comes downstairs in a Hitler Youth uniform and savagely attacks March's German-American maid when she refuses to Heil Hitler. Realizing that the boy's mind had been distorted by Nazi teachings, March and Betty determine to cure him through patience and kindness. Skippy, however, scoffs at the American way of life. At school, he promptly makes himself hated because of his arrogance and, at home, he deliberately starts a "divide and conquer" campaign, aimed at breaking up March's approaching marriage to Betty. He succeeds in provoking a quarrel between the couple, causing Betty to break the engagement. One day, little Joan catches Skippy in the act of going through March's desk in search of important papers that might be of use to the Nazis. When she threatens to inform her father, Skippy attacks her with a poker and flees from the house. With Joan injured seriously, March puts the police on Skippy's trail, and determines to send him to an orphanage. When Skippy returns to the house, March, insane with rage, almost chokes him to death, but Betty restrains him. The realization that he had almost killed Joan brings about a sudden reformation in Skippy and he breaks down with genuine remorse. Betty, convinced that the youngster now understood the fallacies of Nazism, induces March to let the boy stay.

Ring Lardner Jr. and Leopold Atlas wrote the screen play, Lester Cowan produced it, and Leslie Fenton directed it. The cast includes Edith Angold, Rudy Wissler, Boots Brown, Marvin Davis and others.

"Lake Placid Serenade" with Vera Hrubá Ralston

(Republic, release date not set; time, 85 min.)

Those who enjoy watching graceful figure skating and lavish production numbers with ice-skating ballets should find much in "Lake Placid Serenade" to please them, for the skating part of the picture is well done. Not much can be said, however, for the story, which is extremely weak, nor for the comedy, which is pretty dull. Miss Ralston is an excellent skater, executing her routines with the utmost of ease and grace. An apache dance on skates, with McGowan and Mack, is an outstanding specialty number. Roy Rogers puts in an appearance as a guest star in a carnival sequence, singing one song. His introduction, however, is embarrassingly commercial. Ray Noble and his Orchestra and Harry Owens' Hawaiians furnish the music:—

Miss Ralston, an orphan girl raised by Lloyd Corrigan in a Czech village, wins the national skating championship of her country, and receives an invitation to appear at the Lake Placid Carnival in the United States. Turning down an offer of a contract from Walter Catlett, an American ice-show producer, and Vera Vague, his wealthy, man-hunting financial backer, Miss Ralston goes to Lake Placid where she receives a rousing ovation for her skating skill. When the outbreak of war prevents her return to Czechoslovakia, she contacts Eugene Pallette, her wealthy American uncle, whom she had never met. Pallette welcomes her into his palatial home, where he lived with his two daughters, Stephanie Bachelor and Ruth Terry. Stephanie, a snob, treats her cousin shabbily, but Ruth is more congenial. Miss Ralston meets and falls in love with Robert Livingston, Pallette's junior partner, but is dismayed when she learns that he was Stephanie's "property." Lest she cause unhappiness to Stephanie, Miss Ralston runs away from the house. She signs a contract with Catlett, with a provision that she be permitted to skate under an assumed name. Pallette, discovering the reason for her disappearance, learns that Miss Ralston was scheduled to appear in a New York ice show, and is instrumental in bringing Livingston to her. Stephanie, realizing that her love for Livingston was hopeless, graciously gives the young couple her blessing.

Dick Irving Hyland wrote the screen play, Harry Grey produced it, and Steve Sekely directed it. The cast includes William Frawley, John Litel, Ludwig Stossel, Andrew Tombes, Twinkle Watts, the Merry Meisters and others.

"Alaska" with Kent Taylor and Margaret Lindsay

(Monogram, Dec. 22; time, 76 min.)

A fair program melodrama about the Northwest. The story, based on Jack London's "Flush of Gold," is somewhat muddled in its development, and the action is considerably slow in spots, but on the whole it contains enough excitement and thrills to satisfy non-discriminating audiences. They should particularly enjoy the climatic fist fight towards the finish, where the hero beats the villain into submission, compelling him to reveal the identity of the claim jumpers' secret leader. The performances are generally good:—

Arrested and charged with the murder of two claim jumpers, who had murdered his father, Kent Taylor is released by Marshal Dean Jagger in the custody of George Cleveland, Postmaster of Rocky Mount, Alaska, until the weather would permit travel to Juneau. Margaret Lindsay, singer in Nils Asther's gambling palace, determines to help Taylor clear himself; she loved Kent, although married to John Carradine, a former Shakespearean actor and inveterate drunkard. Asther, who loved Margaret, was secretly in league with the claim jumpers. When Kent utilizes his free time to obtain evidence against the claim jumpers, who were working together with the town's crooked judge, Asther frames a false murder charge against him and has him placed in the local jail, where he could be railroaded by the crooked judge. Margaret agrees to go away with Asther if he would save Kent. Asther promises, then contrives to have the jail set on fire with Kent in it. Carradine, realizing Margaret's love for Kent, and eager to redeem himself for the unhappiness he had caused her, dashes into the burning jail and saves Kent at the cost of his own life. Kent hurries to the saloon, where he surprises Asther as he prepares to make a getaway. Beaten into submission by Kent, Asther is shot dead by Jagger just as he starts to name the secret leader of the claim jumpers. Jagger admits being the leader and, in a short struggle, is subdued by Kent and jailed.

George W. Sayre, Malcolm S. Boylan, and Harrison Orkow wrote the screen play, Lindsley Parsons produced it, and George Archainbaud directed it.

Unobjectionable morally.

"Between Two Women" with Van Johnson and Lionel Barrymore

(MGM, no release date set; time, 83 min.)

A pretty good addition to the "Dr. Gillespie" series of comedy-dramas. The story offers a pleasing blend of drama and humor, with more than the usual stress placed on the comedy. The dialogue is unusually bright, and Van Johnson's romance with Marilyn Maxwell has been given some amusing touches. It has the usual human interest of the previous pictures, and there are several emotional situations. One in particular is where Johnson performs a delicate operation on a woman whose confidence in him was unshakable. Lionel Barrymore continues his role of the caustic but loveable head doctor, and the comedy resulting from his by-play with the hospital staff is consistently amusing. Two night-club sequences provide an opportunity for the presentation of some pleasing musical interludes:—

While at a night-club with Marilyn Maxwell, Van Johnson is called to one of the dressing rooms, where Gloria DeHaven, a singer, had fainted. Johnson takes her to Blair Hospital where, after a complete physical examination, he diagnoses her illness as a case of neuro-psychiatric self-starvation. Diplomatically probing into her private life, Johnson learns that Gloria was blaming herself for the death of a chorus girl, who had lost her job after a quarrel with her. Because the girl had died of starvation, Gloria could not partake of any food. Johnson investigates the case and learns that the dead girl had been an alcoholic, who drank herself into malnutrition and death. Convinced by Johnson that the dead girl had sufficient funds for food, and that she was not responsible for her death, Gloria regains her desire to eat. Meanwhile Mary Blake, the hospital's telephone operator, is taken ill, and an x-ray reveals that one kidney must be removed. Though assured that a leading surgeon would perform the operation, Mary refuses to go through with it unless Johnson operates; she wanted a doctor who would have a personal interest in seeing her live. Johnson performs the operation successfully and, following Mary's recuperation, Dr. Lionel Barrymore gives a party in her honor at a fashionable night-club.

Harry Ruskin wrote the screen play, and Willis Goldbeck directed it. The cast includes Keenan Wynn, Alma Kruger, Keye Luke and others.

"Dangerous Passage" with Robert Lowery and Phyllis Brooks

(Paramount, no release date set; time, 62 min.)

A routine program action melodrama, revolving around the adventures of a young American, who, on his way home from South America to claim an inheritance, becomes mixed up with an assortment of odd characters and finds himself beset by intrigue, murder, and a deliberate shipwreck. In spite of the fact that the far-fetched story is more confusing than mystifying, the action fans will probably find it to their liking, for it offers some exciting moments. Since the hero's life is constantly in danger, it has considerable suspense:—

Robert Lowery, an American in San Angel, obtains affidavits from Charles Arnt, an attorney, proving that he is the legal heir to \$200,000 left by his grandfather in Galveston. After handing Lowery the affidavits and a steamship ticket, Arnt has one of his henchmen (Jack LaRue) attack the young man in an effort to steal the affidavits; Arnt hoped to substitute LaRue for Lowery in claiming the inheritance. Lowery beats off LaRue and, instead of waiting for his scheduled boat, sails immediately on a tramp freighter to avoid a possible trap. On board ship he meets Phyllis Brooks, a night-club entertainer; Alec Craig, the steward; and John Eldredge, an official of the steamship line, who resented his attentions to Phyllis. Before long, Lowery learns that Phyllis and Craig were insurance investigators, seeking to obtain evidence against Eldredge, who was suspected of scuttling ships to collect insurance money. After a series of incidents, in which Craig is murdered and several attempts are made on his own life, Lowery finds himself confronted by Arnt and LaRue, who had boarded the ship at the first stop. He halts their search for the affidavits by revealing that he had mailed them to himself in Galveston, care of general delivery. That night, Eldredge deliberately steers the ship on a reef, and all except Phyllis, Lowery, Arnt, and LaRue lose their lives. Arnt and LaRue attempt to murder Lowery but he is saved by Phyllis just as a seaplane comes to their rescue. In Galveston, Arnt and LaRue make a final effort to obtain the inheritance while Lowery lies injured in a hospital. Phyllis, however, foils their plans, later aiding Lowery to trap and turn them over to the police.

Geoffrey Homes wrote the screen play, and William Burke directed it. Pine-Thomas produced it. Unobjectionable.

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The Implications of the U.S. Supreme Court Decision in the Crescent Case

In the issue of HARRISON'S REPORTS of December 17 there was discussed the victory of the U.S. Government in the Crescent case as a result of the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. In that issue the statement was made that reference to this case and to the U.S. Supreme Court decision will again be made.

The decision of the U.S. Supreme Court is so important that HARRISON'S REPORTS again refers to it, in greater detail. In doing so, it feels that it is rendering the industry as a whole a great service, for it is this paper's desire that producers, distributors and exhibitors, whether affiliated or independent, owners either of a single theatre or of a circuit of theatres, whether large or small, understand the implications of this decision clearly, lest they find themselves in serious trouble if they should continue to resort to practices they resorted to in the past.

In order to save the reader the trouble of looking up either the December 16 issue or other issues for the facts of this case, a recapitulation of these facts may not be out of place:

In 1938, the Department of Justice brought suit against Crescent Amusement Company, of Nashville, Tennessee, and its affiliates as well as against some of the officers of the parent company and of its affiliates, for violation of the Anti-Trust laws in effecting and maintaining a monopoly in restraint of trade in the theatre business in the territories where they operate, by the following acts: employing their buying power for the purpose of making it either difficult or impossible for their competitors to buy film, eventually compelling many of them to sell their theatres to the "monopoly" by means of, (a) buying the building in which a competitor had a theatre; (b) building a competitive theatre regardless of the town's needs; (c) compelling the distributors to sell their pictures to them instead of to their competitors; (d) long term franchises; (e) repeat runs, and by other acts.

The eight major companies were named as co-defendants, but when the case came to trial the complaint against the five companies that signed the Consent Decree was dismissed, and later on the Court found that the charges against Universal and Columbia had not been sustained, but United Artists was found to have violated the Anti-Trust laws in two small towns by combining with some of the defendants to eliminate independent theatre competition.

The case was tried before Judge Elmer D. Davies and, in May, 1943, Judge Davies found the defendants guilty of building up and maintaining in the picture theatre business a monopoly and enjoined and restrained them from continuing their monopoly. The judge declared the film franchises of the combination with the film distributors, with exception of those entered into by its Nashville theatres, invalid, ordered the divestment of interlocking ownership among the defendants, and prohibited them from any further employing their tactics against their independent exhibitor competitors.

Because of the fact that Judge Davies did not incorporate in his decree a provision restraining the defendants from ac-

quiring additional theatres as a protection for the independent exhibitors in their (the defendant's) territories, the Department of Justice filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court requesting that the decree be remanded to Judge Davies for correction so as to enjoin and restrain the defendants from acquiring additional theatres, except in Nashville, unless they first proved to the Court that the acquisition of a theatre would not restrain competition unreasonably. The contention of the Government was that, once a theatre is acquired by the defendants, the damage to competition cannot be repaired even if the Government should afterwards prove that the acquisition of that theatre was in restraint of trade. And the U.S. Supreme Court, by its sweeping decision of December 11, found for the Government.

This decision settles some questions that no other decision had settled previously.

One of the most important is its declaration that exhibition of motion pictures is Interstate Commerce. The Court said:

"Interstate commerce was found to have been employed in consummating the conspiracy. . . ."

After explaining how pictures are sold and in which way they reach the exhibitor, the Court said:

" . . . The findings are wholly adequate to establish that the business of the exhibitors involves a regular interchange of films in interstate commerce. As we shall see, that course of business may be sufficient to make the Sherman Act applicable to the business of exhibiting motion pictures. . . . " And elsewhere in the decision, " . . . And as we have said, the course of business which involves a regular exchange of films in interstate commerce is adequate to bring the exhibitors within the reach of the Sherman Act. . . . "

The second question that it settles is the fact that a defendant in a motion picture anti-trust case cannot use the argument that he will suffer hardships in order to dissuade the court from ordering him to divest himself of his illegally acquired theatre interests. The defendants in this case, in their cross-appeal, pleaded that the divestment of their stock interests would, under the current tax laws, be tantamount to confiscation. But the Court said:

"In the five-year period ended in August 1939 when this bill was filed the exhibitors experienced a rather rapid growth—in the number of towns where their theatres were operated; in the number of towns where they operated without competition; in their earnings and surplus. The United States claims that that growth was the product of restraints of trade in violation of §1 of the Sherman Act and of monopolistic practices in violation of §2." (The enumeration of the violations follows.) And in its decision, the Court stated:

"Those who violate the Act [the Sherman Act] may not reap the benefits of their violations and avoid an undoing of their unlawful project on the plea of hardship or incon-

(Continued on last page)

"The Suspect" with Charles Laughton and Ella Raines

(Universal, Jan. 26; time, 85 min.)

Good production values, expert direction, fine performances by the cast, and an engrossing story, make this murder melodrama a superior thriller. It holds one in suspense from beginning to end, never once letting the spectator's attention slip. It is a grim study of an inherently kind man, who is goaded into murdering his nagging wife in order to protect the reputation of a decent young woman, with whom he had an innocent relationship. The subsequent developments, which compel him to murder a drunken blackmailer so as to cover up his first crime, will keep the spectator on the edge of his seat. Charles Laughton, as the middle-aged murderer, gives one of the best portrayals of his career, managing to win one's sympathy despite his murderous deeds. The only unconvincing part of the picture is the romance between Laughton and Ella Raines; one finds it hard to believe that a beautiful young woman would fall in love with a man who is, not only old enough to be her father, but is also an unromantic type. The action takes place in London at the turn of the century:—

Laughton, manager of a tobacco shop, returns home from work one evening and finds his son (David Harens) packing to leave home because of a quarrel with his mother (Rosalind Ivan). Having endured his wife's nagging for many years, Laughton sympathizes with the boy. He grasps the opportunity to move out of his wife's bedroom and moves into his son's former room. When jobless and lonely Ella Raines comes to his shop seeking employment, Laughton, unable to employ her himself, finds a job for her elsewhere. A gentle friendship develops between the two, and they see each other frequently, Laughton, however, does not tell her that he was married. His wife learns of the relationship and, during a bitter quarrel, taunts him unmercifully about the girl and threatens to blacken her name. Driven insane by her goading, Laughton murders his wife and makes it appear as if her death had been accidental. The "accident," however, arouses the suspicions of Inspector Stanley Ridges, whose untiring investigation causes Laughton considerable concern. Laughton and Ella eventually marry, and both settle down to a happy life. Ridges, however, with bulldog tenacity, continues questioning every one who might know something about Laughton. The Inspector's questions arouse the suspicions of Henry Daniell, Laughton's drunken neighbor, who shrewdly guesses that Laughton might have murdered his first wife. Daniell confronts Laughton and, slyly convincing him that he was aware of the murder, demands blackmail money. Distraught, Laughton murders the drunkard by poisoning his drink. He disposes of the body and makes arrangements to go to Canada with his unsuspecting bride. Aboard ship, with but a few minutes before sailing time, Ridges runs into Laughton as if by accident. Ridges wishes Laughton bon voyage and off-handedly mentions that Daniell's body had been found, and that the dead man's wife (Molly Lamont), a kindly soul, had been charged with the murder. Although free to leave England if he chooses, Laughton's sense of decency does not permit him to let an innocent woman suffer; he leaves the boat and gives himself up.

Bertram Millhauser wrote the screen play, Islin Auster produced it, and Robert Siodmak directed it. The cast includes Raymond Severn, Maude Eburn, and others.

Strictly adult entertainment.

"Tahiti Nights" with Jinx Falkenburg and Dave O'Brien

(Columbia, Dec. 28; time, 63 min.)

A mediocre program musical. It is a weak box-office attraction; in addition to the fact that it lacks star names, the story is inane. Nor do the romantic mixups, which involve Jinx Falkenburg and Dave O'Brien, provide any amusement, for what happens is too silly to be entertaining. The Vagabonds, a comedy quartet who sing to their own musical accompaniment, provide the picture's most entertaining moments and, except for a few spurts of comedy provoked by their antics, the rest of the proceedings are boring:—

Completing an engagement in Honolulu, Dave O'Brien and his band take a trip to a Tahitian island, where O'Brien's mother (Florence Bates) was the Queen. O'Brien, a light-skinned native, learns to his dismay that his mother had promised him in marriage to Jinx Falkenburg, daughter of Cy Kendall, chief of another community. O'Brien protests in vain. Meanwhile Jinx, too, resented the forthcoming marriage, and she pleads with her father to be released. Kendall, however, insists that she go through with the marriage. O'Brien and Jinx, who did not know each other, meet accidentally at a swimming pond. Both fall in love and bewail the fact that each has to marry someone else. In their ecstasy, they neglect to tell each other their names. O'Brien, however, eventually learns who she is, but does not reveal his own identity. On the day of the marriage ceremony, Jinx dresses Mary Treen, her maid, in the bridal veil. She instructs Mary to take her place at the altar while she runs away. Confusion reigns when the deception is discovered, but Jinx cannot be found. Just as O'Brien prepares to leave the island, Jinx is discovered and brought back to the village. She is delighted no end to find that she had been running away from the man she loved.

Lillie Hayward wrote the screen play, Sam White produced it, and Will Jason directed it. The cast includes Carole Matthews and others.

Unobjectionable morally.

"The Mummy's Curse" with Lon Chaney and Peter Coe

(Universal, no release date set; time, 60 min.)

A run-of-the-mill program horror melodrama. Since what transpires is, in the main, repetitious of the wierd, fantastic dramatics that were used in the previous "Mummy" pictures, its chief appeal will be to those to whom the series is new, as well as to the avid horror picture fans. As in the other pictures, the action revolves around a three thousand-year-old mummy, who, restored to life by a mysterious brew of rare leaves, terrorizes the countryside as he searches for his mate, another mummy, who miraculously frees herself from her mummified state and becomes a modern though strange beautiful woman. The bayou country of Louisiana and a deserted monastery provide an effective eerie background for the strange pro-

ceedings, which have all the suspense and chills generally found in pictures of this type:—

Addison Richards, superintendent of a construction project in the bayou country, finds it difficult to keep the natives on the job; a series of strange murders in the swamps had terrified them. Dennis Moore, a curator, and Peter Coe, his Egyptian assistant, arrive in the midst of Richards' trouble and announce that they had come to search for two mislaid mummies, last known to have disappeared in the surrounding swamps. They explain that the mummies had been an Egyptian prince and princess more than three thousand years previously, and that the prince had been buried alive as punishment for trying to restore the princess to life after she had died. Moore wanted both mummies for his museum. Unknown to Moore, Coe was an Egyptian high priest, who had been commissioned by his sect to find and return the mummies to Egypt. Martin Kosleck, Coe's henchman, had located Kharis, the male mummy (Lon Chaney), and had hidden him in a deserted monastery pending Coe's arrival. Coe, with a mysterious brew of leaves, brings Kharis to life. The brew brings to life also Princess Ananka, the female mummy, who rises from the swamps. The sun's rays, however, turn her into a beautiful woman (Virginia Christine). She is found wandering in the swamps by Moore, who gives her shelter in his camp. Coe, recognizing her as Kharis' princess, orders the mummy to capture her. In the ensuing action, Kharis creates a reign of terror as he pursues the princess, murdering those who get in his way. The girl tries to elude him, but he eventually catches her and carries her to the monastery, where she resumes her mummified state. Meanwhile Moore and a posse descend on the monastery and, after a tense battle, destroy the Egyptian priests and the mummies.

Bernard Schubert wrote the screen play, Oliver Drake produced it, and Leslie Goodwins directed it. The cast includes Kay Harding, Kurt Katch and others.

Too horrifying for children.

"I'll Be Seeing You" with Joseph Cotten, Ginger Rogers and Shirley Temple

(United Artists, Jan. 5; time, 85 min.)

An intelligently produced, emotion-stirring drama, with a particular appeal to women because of the romantic involvements. It is a timely, poignant story about a shell-shocked soldier, who, on a furlough from a hospital to prove to himself that he had a definite place in society, meets and falls in love with a girl, who herself was on a ten-day holiday from a state penitentiary, where she was serving a six-year term for accidental manslaughter. As the young couple seeking to rehabilitate themselves, Joseph Cotten and Ginger Rogers play their respective roles with keen understanding, winning the spectator's sympathy with their fine traits. One feels deeply the strain under which Ginger labors as she tries to keep her convict life secret from Cotten lest the revelation wreck the new-found confidence she had helped him attain. The action is somewhat slow and somber in spots, but this does not detract from one's enjoyment of the picture, for it has many appealing situations, and the story holds one's interest throughout:—

Given a ten-day Christmas leave from prison because of good behaviour, Ginger Rogers boards a train for Pinehill, where she had been invited to spend the holidays at the home of her aunt and uncle (Spring Byington and Tom Tully), and their daughter (Shirley Temple). En route, Ginger meets Sergeant Joseph Cotten, who was on furlough from an army hospital, where he had been undergoing treatment as a neuropsychiatric, the result of wounds received in battle. Cotten, pretending he had a sister in town, gets off the train at Pinehill and, shortly after, telephones Ginger and asks her for a date. Ginger's understanding relatives ask her to invite him to dinner. A romance develops between the two and, under Ginger's kindly influence and guidance, Cotten slowly regains confidence in himself. Ginger, too, finds hope in the future under the steadying influence of her genial aunt and uncle. Meanwhile she withholds the truth about herself from Cotten lest its disclosure have an adverse effect on his improved mental condition. At the end of his furlough, when Cotten comes to the house to bid Ginger and the family goodbye, Shirley inadvertently reveals to him the truth about Ginger. He departs from Pinehill disillusioned, leaving Ginger heartbroken. Returning to the penitentiary, Ginger finds Cotten waiting for her at the gates. He promises to wait for her release, and both part with renewed hope for the future.

Marion Parsonett wrote the screen play, Dore Schary produced it, and William Dieterle directed it. The cast includes Chill Wills and others.

Morally suitable for all.

A CORRECTION

The HARRISON'S REPORTS Partial Index No. 6 (Blue Issue), dated November 25, 1944, mistakenly gave the release date of Paramount News No. 24 as Sunday, November 19. The correct release date of Paramount News No. 24 is Thursday, November 23. As a result of this error, the complete listing of the Paramount News release schedule, as shown in Partial Index No. 6, is out of order. The following is the corrected schedule:

No. 24	Thursday (E)	.....Nov. 23
No. 25	Sunday (O)	.....Nov. 26
No. 26	Thursday (E)	.....Nov. 30
No. 27	Sunday (O)	.....Dec. 3
No. 28	Thursday (E)	.....Dec. 7
No. 29	Sunday (O)	.....Dec. 10
No. 30	Thursday (E)	.....Dec. 14
No. 31	Sunday (O)	.....Dec. 17
No. 32	Thursday (E)	.....Dec. 21
No. 33	Sunday (O)	.....Dec. 24
No. 34	Thursday (E)Dec. 30
No. 35	Sunday (O)Dec. 31
No. 36	Thursday (E)Jan. 4
No. 37	Sunday (O)Jan. 7

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venience. That principle is adequate here to justify divestiture of all interests in some of the affiliates since their acquisition was part of the fruits of the conspiracy. . . ."

To the complaint of the defendants that the divestiture provisions of the decree are harsh, particularly to the minority stockholders, the Court said:

"Serious complaint is made of the divestiture provisions of the decree. It requires each corporate exhibitor to divest itself of the ownership of any stock or other interest in any other corporate defendant or affiliated corporation, and enjoins it from acquiring any interest in those companies. . . . A year from the date of entry of the decree is allowed for completing this divestiture.

"It is said that these provisions are inequitable and harsh income tax wise, that they exceed any reasonable requirement for the prevention of future violations, and that they are therefore punitive.

"The Court has quite consistently recognized in this type of Sherman Act case that the government should not be confined to an injunction against further violations. Dissolution of the companies will be ordered where the creation of the combination is itself the violation. . . .

"The fact that minority stockholders of the affiliated companies are not parties to the suit is no legal barrier to a separation of the companies. . . . No legal right of one stockholder is normally affected if another stockholder is required to sell his stock and no exception to that rule has been shown to exist here. . . ."

To the objection of the defendants as regards the provisions of the decree enjoining them from making franchises with certain distributors "with the purpose and effect of maintaining their theatre monopolies and preventing independent exhibitors from competing with them" on the ground that these provisions will aggrandize the distributors at the expense of the exhibitors in that they deprive the exhibitors of group purchasing power; that the franchise agreements are normal and necessary both for distributors and exhibitors, and that these provisions of the decree will greatly burden the conduct of these businesses, the Court said:

"It is not for us, however, to pick and choose between competing business and economic theatrics in applying this law. Congress has made that choice. It has declared that the rule of trade and commerce should be competition not combination. . . ."

A third question that it seems to settle is the fact that it is not necessary that there be a combination of exhibitors with distributors in order to effect a conspiracy in restraint of trade. A combination of exhibitors alone, even of two of them, may effect the conspiracy. The Court, however, took pains to distinguish between pooling of independent theatres for the purpose of obtaining product on better terms, and a combination of exhibitors for the purpose of either depriving another exhibitor of an opportunity to obtain product or of resorting to other acts the effect of which would be to drive him out of business. A conspiracy may now be considered as having been effected by exhibitors within a single state, a single county, and even a single street. The Court said:

"The District Court found that some of the distributors were co-conspirators on certain phases of the program. But we can put that circumstance to one side and not stop to inquire whether the findings are adequate on that phase of the case. For it is immaterial whether the distributors technically were or were not members of the conspiracy. The showing of motion pictures is of course a local affair. But action by a combination of exhibitors to obtain an agreement with a distributor whereby commerce with a competing exhibitor is suppressed or restrained is a conspiracy in restraint of trade and a conspiracy to monopolize a part of the trade or commerce among the States, each of which is prohibited by the Sherman Act. And as we have said, the course of business which involves a regular exchange of films in interstate commerce is adequate to bring the exhibitors within the reach of the Sherman Act. . . ."

A fourth question that U.S. Supreme Court answered was in establishing the precedent that the courts may police the acts of guilty defendants in the event that they should desire to acquire new theatres. The Court stated:

"The Court at times has rather freely modified decrees in Sherman Act cases where it approved the conclusions of the District Court as to the nature and character of the violations. . . . We recognize however that there is a wide range of discretion in the District Court to mould the decree to the exigencies of the particular case; and where the findings of violations are sustained, we will not direct a recasting of the decree except on a showing of abuse of discretion. . . . We think this is a case where we should act lest the public interest not be adequately protected by the decree as cast.

"The generality of this provision of the decree bids fair to call for a retrial of a Sherman Act case any time a citation for contempt is issued. The crucial facts in each case would be subtle ones as is usually true where purpose and motive are at issue. This type of provision is often the only practical remedy against continuation of illegal trade practices. But we are dealing here with a situation which permits of a more select treatment. The growth of this combine has been the result of predatory practices condemned by the Sherman Act. The object of the conspiracy was the destruction or absorption of competitors. It was successful in that endeavor. The pattern of past conduct is not easily forsaken. Where the proclivity for unlawful activity has been as manifest as here, the decree should operate as an effective deterrent to a repetition of the unlawful conduct and yet not stand as a barrier to healthy growth on a competitive basis. The acquisition of a competing theatre terminates at once its competition. Punishment for contempt does not restore the competition which has been eliminated. And where businesses have been merged or purchased and closed out it is commonly impossible to turn back the clock. Moreover if the District Court were to supervise future acquisitions in this case, it would not be undertaking an onerous and absorbing administrative burden. The burden would not seem more onerous than under the alternative provision where in substance the issue would be violation of the Sherman Act *vel non*.

"These considerations impel us to conclude that the decree should be revised so as to prohibit future acquisitions of a financial interest in additional theatres outside Nashville 'except after an affirmative showing that such acquisition will not unreasonably restrain competition.'"

(To be concluded next week)

PICTURE PROPAGANDA AMONG COMMUNITY GROUPS

"Major companies," says the November 25 issue of Motion Picture Herald, "are expanding their promotion and exploitation departments to include particularized coverage of special community groups. . . ."

The article then goes on to say what some companies are doing with the aforementioned idea in view.

Working among women's clubs, Kiwanis, Rotarians and others is, indeed commendable, but such work would have been much more effective if the quality of pictures were raised. The present run of pictures is the worst seen in years, and even though large sums of money are paid for stories, and fewer pictures are produced, the percentage of good pictures out of the total is no higher than it was in previous years. It is true that a greater number of expensive pictures are produced, but the percentage remains the same.

It seems as if the ease with which the dollars are rolling into the box offices of the theatres is the main cause; it has robbed the producers of the incentive of improving the quality. If any one makes a remark, the producers present him with figures of receipts as an answer.

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